

GULF OF MEXICO FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

REEF FISH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Hilton Baton Rouge Baton Rouge, Louisiana

January 30-31, 2023

VOTING MEMBERS

- 10 Tom Frazer.....Florida
- 11 Kevin Anson (designee for Scott Bannon).....Alabama
- 12 Susan Boggs.....Alabama
- 13 Billy Broussard.....Louisiana
- 14 Rick Burris (designee for Joe Spraggins).....Mississippi
- 15 Dale Diaz.....Mississippi
- 16 Jonathan Dugas.....Louisiana
- 17 Phil Dyskow.....Florida
- 18 Dakus Geeslin (designee for Robin Riechers).....Texas
- 19 Bob Gill.....Florida
- 20 Michael McDermott.....Mississippi
- 21 Chris Schieble (designee for Patrick Banks).....Louisiana
- 22 Bob Shipp.....Alabama
- 23 Andy Strelcheck.....NMFS
- 24 Greg Stunz.....Texas
- 25 C.J. Sweetman.....Florida
- 26 Troy Williamson.....Texas

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

- 29 Dave Donaldson.....GSMFC
- 30 Lisa Motoi.....USCG

STAFF

- 33 Assane Diagne.....Economist
- 34 Zeenatul Basher.....Coral and Habitat Biologist
- 35 John Froeschke.....Deputy Director
- 36 Beth Hager.....Administrative Officer
- 37 Lisa Hollensead.....Fishery Biologist
- 38 Ava Lasseter.....Anthropologist
- 39 Mary Levy.....NOAA General Counsel
- 40 Natasha Mendez-Ferrer.....Fishery Biologist
- 41 Emily Muehlstein.....Public Information Officer
- 42 Ryan Rindone.....Lead Fishery Biologist/SEDAR Liaison
- 43 Bernadine Roy.....Office Manager
- 44 Charlotte Schiaffo.....Administrative & Human Resources Assistant
- 45 Carrie Simmons.....Executive Director
- 46 Carly Somerset.....Fisheries Outreach Specialist

1
2 **OTHER PARTICIPANTS**
3 Joy Hazell.....UF/IFAS
4 Kerry Marhefka.....SAFMC
5 Jim Nance.....GMFMC SSC
6 Clay Porch.....SEFSC
7 Andrew Ropicki.....
8 Maria Starr.....NOAA
9 Jessica Stephen.....NMFS
10 Ed Walker.....GMFMC RF AP

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12 - - -
13

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4 Action: Modification of Gray Triggerfish Commercial Trip Limits
5 and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of Commerce for review
6 and implementation and deem the codified text as necessary and
7 appropriate, giving staff editorial license to make the
8 necessary changes in the document. The Council Chair is given
9 the authority to deem any changes to the codified text as
10 necessary and appropriate. [The motion carried on page 9.](#)
11

12 [PAGE 15](#): Motion to direct staff to start a document to modify
13 Gulf gray snapper catch limits. [The motion carried on page 15.](#)
14

15 [PAGE 80](#): Motion in Action 1 to move Options 2c and 3c in
16 Alternatives 2 and 3 to Considered but Rejected. [The motion](#)
17 [carried on page 81.](#)
18

19 [PAGE 106](#): Motion to direct staff to develop the following
20 options for exploration in a framework action or amendment:
21 lowering the gag and black grouper recreational bag limit;
22 establishing a gag and black grouper recreational vessel limit;
23 spatial areas to protect spawning gag. [The motion carried on](#)
24 [page 109.](#)
25

26 [PAGE 121](#): Motion in Action 1 to add an Option b to Alternatives
27 2, 3, and 4. Option b is modify the recreational fishing season
28 for the Gulf jacks complex (i.e. lesser amberjack, almaco jack,
29 banded rudderfish) such that this season is open June through
30 February. [The motion carried on page 123.](#)
31

32 [PAGE 126](#): Motion in Action 2 to add an Alternative 4 to
33 establish a commercial trip limit of seven fish. [The motion](#)
34 [carried on page 127.](#)
35

36 [PAGE 133](#): Motion to request SEFSC provide a presentation to the
37 council regarding multiyear ACL averages to monitor ACLs. [The](#)
38 [motion carried on page 133.](#)
39

40 [PAGE 142](#): Motion to request that staff begin development of a
41 framework action to update the recreational red snapper data
42 calibration ratios for Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, using
43 the calibration ratios recommended by the SSC during their
44 January 2023 meeting. [The motion carried on page 143.](#)
45

46 - - -
47

1 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
2 Management Council convened at the Hilton Baton Rouge in Baton
3 Rouge, Louisiana on Monday afternoon, January 30, 2023, and was
4 called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

5
6 **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**
7 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
8 **ACTION GUIDE AND NEXT STEPS**
9

10 **CHAIRMAN TOM FRAZER:** All right, and so I will call to order the
11 Reef Fish Committee. The first order of business on the agenda
12 is the Adoption of the Agenda, which is Tab B, Number 1 in your
13 briefing materials. Is there any modification or changes to the
14 agenda, as written? Not seeing any, is there any opposition to
15 approving the agenda as written? All right. Not seeing any,
16 we'll consider the agenda adopted as written.

17
18 The second item on the agenda is the Approval of the October
19 2022 Minutes. Again, the same question, and are there any
20 modifications or edits to those minutes? Not seeing any, can I
21 get a motion to approve those minutes? Motion by Dr. Sweetman.
22 Is there a second? Second by J.D. Dugas. Any opposition to the
23 approving the minutes? All right. Seeing none, we'll consider
24 the October 2022 minutes of the Reef Fish Committee approved.
25 The third item on the agenda is the Action Guide and Next Steps,
26 and we are going to work with Ms. Somerset, I believe. Carly.

27
28 **FINAL ACTION: DRAFT FRAMEWORK ACTION FOR GRAY TRIGGERFISH**
29 **COMMERCIAL TRIP LIMIT**
30

31 **MS. CARLY SOMERSET:** The first action, in the Action Guide, is
32 to go over the draft framework action, and this is up for final
33 action. It's Modification of Gray Triggerfish Commercial Trip
34 Limits, and so I will go through the document, but, first, I
35 think we should go through public comment, and I will hand it
36 over to Emily.

37
38 **MS. EMILY MUEHLSTEIN:** Okay. Thank you very much, and so we did
39 produce a public hearing video, like we normally do for a
40 framework action, and we had forty-eight views of that video,
41 and we received four comments through our online comment form.

42
43 We did hear support for Preferred Alternative 3, which would
44 increase the commercial trip limit to twenty-five gray
45 triggerfish per vessel, and the rationale that was included was
46 that increasing the trip limit to at least twenty-five fish
47 would optimize the use of the fishery without causing damage to
48 the stock and that triggerfish stocks are healthy and it is

1 possible to catch a limit on each trip.

2
3 We also heard support for increasing the trip limit above
4 twenty-five fish, and the rationale provided was that there are
5 so many gray triggerfish in 190 feet of water and deeper that
6 they are eating the juvenile groupers and snappers. We also
7 heard that increasing the bag limit dissuades culling, because
8 you can retain all the fish you catch, rather than just the
9 large ones.

10
11 Finally, we heard support for decreasing the commercial trip
12 limit, with the rationale that legal gray triggerfish are hard
13 to come by and that the commercial sector isn't catching their
14 quota because the stock isn't robust.

15
16 Finally, we heard some other comments, and mainly that red
17 grouper, gag grouper, and red snapper populations are thriving
18 in south Florida, and so those aren't related to the document,
19 but they came in through those comments, and that's it.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Ms. Muehlstein. I
22 guess we will go ahead. All right, and so we'll go ahead, Ms.
23 Somerset, with the document itself.

24
25 **MS. SOMERSET:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I will move through
26 the document quickly, and I will let Bernie bring it up. This
27 is a pretty straightforward framework action, and I will go
28 through this as quickly as I can, and so, Bernie, if you could
29 go to Table 1.1.1, please.

30
31 Just some background on this document, and this was started --
32 Commercial fishermen have provided comment requesting an
33 increase in the commercial trip limit, in order to better
34 harvest the commercial ACT, and so I'm just showing Table 1.1.1
35 to show you that, within the last three years really, but, here,
36 you can see 2020 and 2021. The percent of ACT landed is 86
37 percent, and then, in 2021, it was 48.7. I just looked at the
38 preliminary landings for the percent of the ACT landed in 2022,
39 from the ACL monitoring page, and that was at 51.5, and so this
40 framework action was to increase the commercial trip limits to
41 better get to the ACT.

42
43 I will go through and read the purpose and need again, just for
44 the record, if we can go to the purpose and need, Bernie. Thank
45 you. All right, and so the purpose of this action is to
46 increase the gray triggerfish commercial trip limit, to allow
47 commercial fishermen the opportunity to land the commercial ACT,
48 and then the need is to help reduce discards, achieve optimum

1 yield of Gulf gray triggerfish, consistent with Magnuson-
2 Stevens.

3
4 Then, to review what has happened recently, the trip limit
5 analysis was done on five alternatives, and so you have the no
6 action alternative, and the current trip limit is sixteen fish.
7 Four alternatives were to increase the commercial trip limit,
8 and the trip limit analysis is in Appendix C, and thank you to
9 Dominique Lazarre at the Southeast Regional Office for doing the
10 analysis, and she was a big help in answering questions and just
11 making sure that the analysis had all the information needed. I
12 believe she's online too, if there are any questions when I'm
13 done with this, for the document.

14
15 At the last meeting, in October, Alternative 5 was removed, and
16 that was the forty-fish trip limit, and that, based on the
17 analysis, could have led to a potential shortened season, and so
18 that was removed by you all as an alternative, and then the
19 preferred alternative that was picked was Alternative 3, and
20 that's increasing the commercial trip limit to twenty-five
21 triggerfish per vessel, and, at the last Reef Fish AP meeting,
22 they also recommended and agreed with the preferred alternative
23 of twenty-five fish. I will leave it there, and I believe
24 that's all the information, unless anyone has any questions on
25 the document or the analysis.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Does anybody have any questions
28 for Ms. Somerset, as it relates to the document? Okay. I
29 didn't think so, and this is something we've been discussing for
30 quite a bit of time now, and there seems to be general agreement
31 that it's a good path to move forward. It is a final action, or
32 slated for final action, and so we'll need a motion, probably,
33 to move this forward. Dr. Sweetman.

34
35 **DR. C.J. SWEETMAN:** Thanks, Dr. Frazer. I have a motion, if,
36 Bernie, you could bring that up, please. **The motion is, and I**
37 **will read it into the record, to recommend the council approve**
38 **Framework Action: Modification of Gray Triggerfish Commercial**
39 **Trip Limits and that it be forwarded to the Secretary of**
40 **Commerce for review and implementation and deem the codified**
41 **text as necessary and appropriate, giving staff editorial**
42 **license to make necessary changes in the document. The Council**
43 **Chair is given the authority to deem any changes to the codified**
44 **text as necessary and appropriate.**

45
46 **MR. BOB GILL:** Second, Mr. Chairman.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. It's seconded by Mr. Gill. Is

1 there any further discussion of the motion? One of the things
2 that we're going to pilot here is our electronic voting, and so,
3 before we vote on this, I'm going to assume -- Let's clear any
4 subsequent discussion out, before we vote, but is there any
5 discussion on the motion? All right. I am not seeing any, and
6 so we're going to get some tutoring. Beth, do you want to help
7 us through this electronic voting?

8
9 **MS. BETH HAGER:** Yes, and so Bernie is just sliding the motion
10 up on the board. Right now, what we're going to do is swap, so
11 that we can show both the voting grid of the people in the room
12 and the motion on the screen at the same time. Everyone should
13 have in front of them their clicker, which, theoretically, the
14 number on the back of it should correspond to your name, when we
15 get to the voting grid. If anybody's does not, please draw it
16 to our attention, so that we're aware of it, and we're going to
17 give this a try.

18
19 Now Bob is online, and we are working on getting him full
20 access. He was having a little difficulty connecting. There we
21 go. I think he's in, and so that's exciting, and so we will
22 have full voting here.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, but, before we actually vote, I just
25 want to remind people that there is codified text that's
26 associated with this framework action, and this document, and,
27 just by way of reference, that's Tab B, Number 4(b) in your
28 briefing materials. It's minor, and people can take a look at
29 it if they want, and we'll certainly bring it back up in Full
30 Council, and so Beth is saying, if you click the wrong thing,
31 you can change your mind. Right now, we're -- Just to be clear,
32 we can choose yes or no or abstain. All right. Let the games
33 begin.

34

DR. SHIPP	YES
MR. ANSON	YES
MS. BOGGS	YES
MR. BROUSSARD	YES
MR. DIAZ	YES
MR. DUGAS	YES
MR. DYSKOW	YES
DR. FRAZER	YES
MR. GEESLIN	YES
MR. GILL	YES
MR. MCDERMOTT	YES
MR. SCHIEBLE	YES
MR. BURRIS	YES

MR. STRELCHECK	YES
DR. STUNZ	YES
DR. SWEETMAN	YES
MR. WILLIAMSON	YES

1
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so the motion passes seventeen
3 to zero. Good job, C.J. All right, and so we have demonstrated
4 proof that we can actually carry out an electronic voting task,
5 and we will have some discussion about whether or not we're
6 going to adopt this, and other things, moving forward, but it
7 was just a pilot in this particular item, and so we've got some
8 time left, and we're going to try to, again, as Dale says, take
9 advantage of that time and try to move as many items through as
10 we can, and so, if it's of no objection, I think, Dr. Nance,
11 we'll move to Item Number IX on the Reef Fish agenda, and that
12 would be the SSC Summary Report and Presentation, as it relates
13 to two items, the SEDAR 75 Gray Snapper Stock Assessment Report
14 and then, if we get through that, then we'll move to the 2023
15 Red Grouper Interim Analysis. Thank you, Dr. Nance.

16
17 **JANUARY 2023 GULF SSC SUMMARY REPORT**
18 **SEDAR 75 GRAY SNAPPER STOCK ASSESSMENT REPORT**
19

20 **DR. JIM NANCE:** You're welcome, and I'll have probably Ryan go
21 through the scope of work first.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Perfect. Mr. Rindone.

24
25 **MR. RYAN RINDONE:** I guess we can take it in pieces, Dr. Nance,
26 and just start with SEDAR 75, and so Dr. Nance is going to talk
27 to you guys about the most recent gray snapper stock assessment.
28 It was an operational assessment that updated the recreational
29 landings information using MRIP-FES and made several other
30 improvements to the previous model, and the SSC found SEDAR 75
31 to be consistent with the best scientific information available
32 and determined that gray snapper is healthy, and so that's good
33 news, as of 2020, and Dr. Nance will also review the SSC's
34 recommendations for the overfishing limit and acceptable
35 biological catch, and you guys should review this information
36 and make recommendations as appropriate. Dr. Nance.

37
38 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you. I guess bring up Slide 31. Perfect, and
39 so this is a presentation of the SEDAR 75 gray snapper stock
40 assessment report, and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center,
41 and it was Dr. Forrestal, came to our meeting and presented the
42 SEDAR 75 operational assessment for the Gulf of Mexico gray
43 snapper.

44

1 SEDAR 75, as was mentioned, resolved several concerns from the
2 previous model, which was presented at SEDAR 51, which was in
3 2018, and it incorporated updated recreational landings data to
4 MRIP-FES. The Southeast Fisheries Science Center reviewed the
5 model's construction and development, indices of relative
6 abundance, the base model estimations and results, diagnostics,
7 and yield projections, based on the council's currently defined
8 status determination criteria. SEDAR 75 uses data through 2020.

9
10 The data used included catch and effort from the directed
11 fleets, which are listed there, and with all of Monroe County in
12 Florida included in the Gulf. The estimates of natural
13 mortality, maximum age, and sex ratio were unchanged from what
14 was used in SEDAR 51. The ratio of fecundity to length was
15 updated with additional samples, with the functional maturity
16 estimated at 2.5 years.

17
18 The recreational landings comprised the bulk of the total
19 landings and follow an increasing trend through the time series.
20 Commercial discards are thought to be very low, and the fits
21 improved compared to SEDAR 51. Recreational discards are
22 underestimated by the model in many years for all modes, with
23 recreational discards increasing with time.

24
25 Some discussion about the potential for the same undersized fish
26 to be discarded multiple times was presented in the analysis,
27 and this issue is particularly applicable to gray snapper,
28 because of the fishing on bridges, jetties, and pier fishing.

29
30 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center showed the model fits to
31 the indices of relative abundance, which shows that fits follow
32 the trends well for most surveys, except for the Florida
33 Wildlife Research Institute age-zero and age-one surveys.
34 Recruitment is estimated to be increasing over time, with a
35 decrease in the last two years. The steepness in the model was
36 fixed at 0.99, indicating a poor stock-recruitment relationship.
37 The initial and present stock size is thought to be larger than
38 estimated in SEDAR 51.

39
40 The Southeast Fisheries Science Center summarized the projection
41 settings, which set relative fishing mortality at the average of
42 2018 through 2020 and selectivity and retention at the values
43 estimated for 2020. Recruitment follows the model-derived
44 Beverton-Holt stock-recruitment relationship and uses 2021
45 landings, as reported by the Southeast Regional Office, and the
46 mean of 2019 through 2021 for 2022 and 2023.

47
48 At our meeting, the SSC discussed using F 26 percent SPR for

1 gray snapper and the parallels drawn at the time, during our
2 discussions of Amendment 51, with the productivity of gray
3 snapper compared to red snapper.

4
5 At the SSC's January 2019 meeting, the Southeast Fisheries
6 Science Center presented projections for gray snapper using
7 three different values for FMSY proxies. They did F 26 percent
8 SPR, F 30 percent SPR, and F 40 percent, along with changing the
9 MSST value from one minus M times BMSY to 0.5 times BMSY, and so
10 those were changed and presented at the January 2019 meeting.

11
12 In January 2023, our last meeting, the SSC found the presented
13 SEDAR 75 analyses to be statistically sound and appropriate and
14 reiterated that 26 percent SPR is scientifically acceptable as a
15 proxy for MSY, but acknowledged, at our meeting, that it would
16 be on the low end of the acceptable proxies.

17
18 You can see our OFL and ABC projections for both 26 percent SPR
19 and 30 percent SPR are shown in the table, and we looked at
20 those, and the ABC projections and yield were calculated at 75
21 percent of FMSY for each of the MSY proxies, and the data are in
22 millions of pounds whole weight.

23
24 The SSC, during our deliberation, noted that the stock currently
25 has more biomass in the water than is needed to sustain present
26 harvest levels at either of these MSY proxies, either the 26
27 percent or the 30 percent. The SSC noted, during our
28 discussions, that F 26 percent SPR is likely at the lower end of
29 the acceptable spectrum of plausible MSY proxies for gray
30 snapper. The SSC did not consider gray snapper less productive
31 than red snapper, with respect to selecting the MSY proxy, but
32 did acknowledge the F 26 percent SPR was among the lowest
33 observed in the Gulf. The SSC acknowledged a planned discussion
34 about setting FMSY proxies at our March 2023 meeting.

35
36 After discussion, a motion was made, and the motion reads the
37 SSC moves to accept the SEDAR 75 Gulf of Mexico gray snapper
38 operational assessment as consistent with the best scientific
39 information available. Under the current FMSY proxy of F 26
40 percent SPR, the model-derived estimates indicate the stock is
41 not overfished and is not undergoing overfishing. That motion
42 carried without opposition and three individuals being absent.

43
44 The next motion was made and discussed, and the motion is, based
45 on the projection settings accepted by the SSC for the SEDAR 75
46 operational assessment, the SSC recommends the following catch
47 levels for Gulf of Mexico gray snapper: OFL be set as the yield
48 (million pounds whole weight) at F 26 percent SPR and ABC as the

1 yield at 75 percent of F 26 percent SPR for the period 2024
2 through 2028, and that motion carried without opposition, with
3 three being absent.

4
5 We also had this discussion, that, while we had those motions to
6 accept those values, the OFL and ABCs for those years, the SSC
7 also supports a constant catch scenario, which is the mean of
8 the five-year period, which results in an OFL of 7.547 million
9 pounds whole weight and an ABC of 6.226 million pounds whole
10 weight. That motion carried without opposition and three being
11 absent. That, Mr. Chair, is the end of that presentation.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so, real quick, are there any
14 questions for Dr. Nance about the SSC's work on gray snapper?
15 Ms. Boggs.

16
17 **MS. SUSAN BOGGS:** So help me understand. I understand what the
18 motions were, but the last point, before you go into your
19 motions, is that the SSC acknowledged a planned discussion about
20 setting FMSY proxies for March 2023, and so are you recommending
21 that we -- That this be done, based on the current proxy of 26
22 percent SPR, but then you may look at it increasing it to 30
23 percent SPR, and are we -- How does this flow, if you're here
24 and then you're going to discuss it in March?

25
26 **DR. NANCE:** The motion is F 26 percent SPR. What I was
27 indicating there, and it probably was confusing, is that we will
28 have -- We're starting to come into that sometimes we set it at
29 26 percent SPR, and sometimes 30 percent, those types of things,
30 and so, as an SSC, we are going to have a general discussion, at
31 our March meeting, about setting those values, but it's not
32 changing what we've made the motions on here.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I guess, Susan, kind of to your point too,
35 right, and so, I mean, we have some catch advice here that
36 should result in the development of a framework action, moving
37 forward, and we've got a couple of things that are in the works,
38 and we still have yellowtail snapper to deal with, and scamp,
39 and so I think, at some point, we'll have to have a discussion
40 about how we want to prioritize those items, you know, and what
41 direction we want to give the staff, but I don't think we have
42 to do that right now. Okay. Are there any more questions with
43 regard to gray snapper. All right. Go ahead, Mr. Anson.

44
45 **MR. ANSON:** It kind of is to gray snapper, and it kind of is
46 going back to Sustainable Fisheries and the conversation that we
47 had about scientific uncertainty and how there is this new
48 potential process for estimating that, and so I'm wondering, Dr.

1 Porch, relative to the comment in Dr. Nance's report, citing
2 that there appears to have been an underestimate in the size of
3 the population, and, therefore, anything that the previous
4 assessments would have projected would not have been accurate,
5 and so, if we were under this newer analysis, or newer approach,
6 relative to scientific uncertainty, I would assume that the
7 Science Center would go back and update, if things were found
8 out to be, in the future, that the approved model projections
9 weren't correct and there was a discrepancy in the amount of the
10 population, so that that number could then be updated
11 appropriately as well, or --
12

13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Clay.
14

15 **DR. CLAY PORCH:** You are referring to that estimate of variance,
16 and so, at some point, when we revisit all that -- I mean, we're
17 in the middle of calculating it now, and so, arguably, the
18 difference between this assessment and the last assessment would
19 be incorporated in that analysis, and I would have to check with
20 my staff, but, in principle, it can be, and so that would figure
21 in the calculation of our uncertainty about assessments.
22

23 In this case, yes, there was a fairly big difference between the
24 two assessments, one because we made some improvements, with a
25 new analyst involved, and, two, because, if you look at actual
26 trends in the indices of abundance, they have continued to go
27 up, and so the assessment is more optimistic now, but, yes, in
28 principle, that kind of difference between two successive
29 assessments would be incorporated into the calculation of that
30 variance.
31

32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Are there any more questions, as they
33 relate to gray snapper? C.J.
34

35 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and not a question, but
36 just a comment. I appreciate the SSC considering the constant
37 catch scenario in this process too here, and I think that's an
38 important thing that we need to consider, as we're working
39 through this. You know, it kind of prevents this declining
40 catch stream scenario, while also keeping us under the quota,
41 and so I appreciate that, Dr. Nance.
42

43 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you.
44

45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Gill.
46

47 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I just wanted to note
48 that this is a bright spot in our management of species. Given

1 the litany of bad news we've had over the past few months, or a
2 year or whatever, it's delightful to see that there's a stock in
3 good shape and doing well and we're talking about increasing the
4 catch limits. Thank you.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Bob, for being the shiner of a
7 bright light. All right. Are there any further questions or
8 comments on gray snapper? I am not seeing any. Dr. Nance,
9 thank you for that, and I guess we can move on to the red
10 grouper interim analysis. Dr. Simmons.

11
12 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CARRIE SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and
13 so, before we go on to that, would the committee like to
14 consider directing staff to start a document, hopefully a
15 framework action, to modify the gray snapper catch levels?

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think we certainly need to do that. My
18 question was -- Well, regardless, we have to do it, whether we
19 prioritize it ahead of something else, but that's something that
20 I was hoping to talk to you and your staff about, and so we've
21 got yellowtail snapper that's out there, right, and we know that
22 we've got to work on that, and I think, from my recollection,
23 we've also got scamp, which is probably going to take a
24 considerable amount of work.

25
26 This one should be relatively easy, and I think we might be able
27 to make some progress, and we have yet to talk about red snapper
28 calibrations, and that's another framework that we're going to
29 discuss tomorrow, and so definitely we need to direct staff to
30 start that work, but maybe a discussion about how we prioritize
31 that workload can wait until either tomorrow or at Full Council,
32 and so if somebody would like to make a motion. Go ahead,
33 Carrie.

34
35 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Well, just some feedback. I mean,
36 that's a great point, but just to keep in mind that the
37 yellowtail snapper document -- The South Atlantic Council has
38 the administrative lead on that, and so I don't think we're
39 going to see that until June, our June council meeting, at the
40 earliest, which we really need to see it in June, I think, if we
41 can, and I haven't talked to Mr. Carmichael about that, and
42 then, regarding scamp, that's going to go back before the SSC in
43 March for the projections, and then the further MSY proxy
44 discussion.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Another bright light shining on the amount of
47 free time that we might have to start a new document. I would
48 be more than willing to entertain a motion for staff to start a

1 document. Mr. Gill.

2
3 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, in accord with that
4 direction, I move that staff start a document to revise catch
5 limits for Gulf of Mexico gray snapper.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We have a motion, and we'll put it on
8 the board, and it's seconded by Dr. Sweetman. Let's get it up,
9 so people know what we be discussing. Give us just a second,
10 Bob.

11
12 All right, and so we have a motion on the board. That motion is
13 to direct staff to begin a document to modify gray snapper catch
14 limits. Is there any further discussion on the motion? We got
15 a second from C.J. With no further discussion, we're going to
16 return to -- There's a third bright spot of the day. We're
17 going to try to vote with these clickers. All right, and so we
18 have opened the vote. We are now closing the vote. If you want
19 to change your mind, you have to do it right now.

20

ONLINE PARTICIPANT	YES
MR. ANSON	YES
MS. BOGGS	YES
MR. BROUSSARD	YES
MR. DIAZ	ABSTAIN
MR. DUGAS	YES
MR. DYSKOW	YES
DR. FRAZER	YES
MR. GEESLIN	YES
MR. GILL	YES
MR. MCDERMOTT	YES
MR. SCHIEBLE	YES
MR. BURRIS	YES
MR. STRELCHECK	YES
DR. STUNZ	YES
DR. SWEETMAN	YES
MR. WILLIAMSON	YES

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. We have closed the vote, and so
23 the motion fails, sixteen in favor with one abstention. It
24 passes. Excuse me. Sorry about that. Dr. Nance.

25
26 **DR. BOB SHIPP:** My name wasn't on there.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** How did we get sixteen then in the total? All
29 right. We're going to move forward, and we will work on some of
30 those electronic voting issues in the background. Dr. Nance, if

1 you want to tell us a little bit about the SSC's discussion of
2 the red grouper interim analysis, that would be great.

3
4 **2023 RED GROUPER INTERIM ANALYSIS**
5

6 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you. I guess, if you're color blind, you're
7 going to have problems with that voting. Anyway, this is our
8 second part, and, Ryan, do we have the scope of work?
9

10 **MR. RINDONE:** We do. All right. Part two, and Dr. Nance will
11 also review discussions from the SSC's discussions on the 2023
12 interim analysis for red grouper, which is part of a standing
13 request for these from the Science Center to be reviewed by the
14 SSC annually, and the last one was in 2022, and this was used as
15 a sort of health check, because the one in 2021 was used to
16 revise the catch limits, and so the SSC evaluated the NMFS
17 bottom longline index, which is the representative index of
18 relative abundance that's used in the interim analysis for red
19 grouper, and it tends to select more so for larger and older red
20 grouper than those that might otherwise be selected by say the
21 commercial vertical line fleet or the private angling and for-
22 hire fleets from the recreational sector, and those fleets can
23 select for larger, older fish, but also select for a good
24 portion of the younger, smaller portion of the population.
25

26 The NMFS bottom longline index was relatively flat over the last
27 ten years, and, given the age of the last stock assessment,
28 noting that SEDAR 61 had a terminal year of 2017 and that any
29 change in the catch limits wouldn't be likely to take effect
30 until 2024, which happens to coincide with the start of the next
31 operational assessment for red grouper, the SSC didn't think
32 that it had the data to support increasing the OFL and ABC based
33 only on the NMFS bottom longline index.
34

35 The SSC did acknowledge the increased recreational landings of
36 red grouper in the last two years, but, without having more data
37 to evaluate, like those generated in a stock assessment, to
38 determine the reason for and effects of that spike in landings,
39 the SSC did not recommend catch limit modifications at this
40 time, and so you guys should review the information that Dr.
41 Nance is going to share and make recommendations, as
42 appropriate. Your show, Dr. Nance.
43

44 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you. I appreciate that summary. We can go
45 ahead and bring up Slide 41, please. Thank you. At our meeting
46 in January, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Dr. Katie
47 Siegfried, came to present the interim analysis for red grouper,
48 and, basically, it's the same as we've seen in the past. It's

1 using landings and data, and also the National Marine Fisheries
2 Service's bottom longline index of relative of relative
3 abundance through 2022.

4
5 These data, as you're each aware of, have been prepared to help
6 inform the SSC about the condition of the Gulf red grouper
7 stock, for which catch limits were previously reduced, following
8 the SEDAR 61 stock assessment, in response to projections about
9 substantial episodic mortality from the 2018 red tide in the
10 eastern Gulf of Mexico.

11
12 Catch limits were subsequently increased, following the 2021
13 interim analysis, which indicated the index used to track
14 population trends had improved. The Southeast Fisheries Science
15 Center provided these interim analyses for red grouper annually
16 for the SSC's evaluation. In 2022, the interim analysis was
17 provided as a health check.

18
19 In 2021, the red grouper interim analysis adjusted catch advice
20 using an index-based harvest control rule and a three-year
21 moving average from the National Marine Fisheries Service's
22 bottom longline survey. The 2023 interim analysis also adjusts
23 the catch advice, using the index-based HCR and a three-year
24 average and five-year moving average of the National Marine
25 Fisheries Service's bottom longline survey.

26
27 The reference year of 2018 is the first year following the
28 terminal year in the SEDAR 61 stock assessment, which was 2017,
29 and corresponds to a reference catch of 5.57 million pounds
30 gutted weight.

31
32 The updated index includes 2020, which saw reduced spatial
33 coverage in sampling, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Higher
34 abundance was observed in 2021, with a decrease following in
35 2022. It's noted that during -- We looked at the last ten
36 years, and the trend is pretty flat across the timeframe. No
37 increase or decrease was noted.

38
39 The SSC discussed the amount of time that had elapsed since the
40 terminal year of the assessment, acknowledging that interim
41 analyses do not really update factors like changes in growth,
42 reproduction, recruitment, et cetera. The SSC acknowledged that
43 uncertainty about the catch advice should be expected to
44 increase with time from the SEDAR 61 terminal year, which,
45 again, is 2017. The SSC doesn't generally support catch
46 recommendations beyond five years from the beginning of the
47 initial projection period.

1 It was noted that the results from the next planned red grouper
2 operational assessment are not anticipated to be reviewed by the
3 SSC until 2025, with management advice expected thereafter.
4 Further, if a change in catch limits were recommended by the SSC
5 at this meeting, that management change would not be expected to
6 take effect until 2024, at best, at about the same time the next
7 red grouper operational assessment begins. We had a long
8 discussion on that.

9
10 Generally, with at flat National Marine Fisheries Service bottom
11 longline index, and no information presented on younger, smaller
12 fish, often selected by the recreational sector, which data was
13 shown that we've seen a spike in landings in 2021 and 2022, the
14 SSC felt that it lacked the information to modify management
15 recommendations at this meeting.

16
17 A motion was made, at the SSC, and the SSC recommends not
18 modifying the current catch limits for Gulf red grouper based on
19 the 2023 interim analysis, and that motion carried without
20 opposition, and that, Mr. Chair, is the presentation.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Nance, as always, for going
23 through that, and so is there any questions from any of the
24 council members with regard to the SSC's discussion on the red
25 grouper interim analysis? Ms. Boggs.

26
27 **MS. BOGGS:** I have two questions, if you don't mind, and it says
28 the SSC doesn't generally support catch recommendations beyond
29 five years from the beginning of the initial projections period,
30 and is that 2017, or what are we looking at for that five-year
31 start date, and then I have one other quick question.

32
33 **DR. NANCE:** 2017.

34
35 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay, and so I did have that right. Then --

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Hold on real quick. Mr. Rindone.

38
39 **MR. RINDONE:** The projections period actually begins after the
40 interim years, and so, in the case of SEDAR 61, 2018 and 2019
41 were interim years, or 2018, 2019, and 2020 I think ended up
42 being the interim years, and the actual updated catch went into
43 effect in 2021, and so, essentially, what we would have done is,
44 for the interim years where we had finalized and, depending on
45 when in the year, preliminary landings, those could have been
46 input into the projections as those actual values, and let's
47 just use an example.

48

1 If we were finishing the assessment today, and it was using data
2 through 2020, like we just did for gray snapper, and we had the
3 data for 2021, and so that was able to be put into the
4 projections as it is, but, for 2022, and we're a month into
5 2023, and we don't have those data yet, and so we used the
6 average of 2019, 2020, and 2021 for 2022 and 2023, knowing that
7 we're not going to change management for gray snapper before the
8 end of 2023, and so 2024 is the first year of the projection
9 period, because we've now made assumptions about what we think
10 has happened between the terminal year in the assessment and
11 when management is actually going to start.

12
13 During that interim period, we also hold constant things like
14 selectivity, the size and age of fish that are being selected by
15 the different fleets, and retention, the size and age of fish
16 that are actually being kept, for that interim period, and also
17 into the projections period, and that usually uses whatever the
18 value is for those parameters from the terminal year of the
19 assessment. In this example for gray snapper, it would be 2020,
20 but that projection period starts in 2024, and so the SSC made a
21 recommendation through 2028, but not beyond 2028, because of
22 what Dr. Nance said, that they don't tend to support projections
23 much beyond that point, because the uncertainty about the
24 precision of those projected yields grows considerably once you
25 get outside of that.

26
27 When we set those though, if we don't make any changes after
28 2028, the way it's codified in the regulations is 2028 and
29 subsequent years, and so, whatever it is for 2028, it stays that
30 way until you guys change it.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

33
34 **MS. BOGGS:** So did you switch from gray snapper back to --

35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** I used gray snapper just as example to explain it.

37
38 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay, and so now you've got me totally confused.

39
40 **MR. RINDONE:** I just used gray snapper as an example of what we
41 do in the interim years for when the projection period actually
42 starts, and so, for red grouper, from SEDAR 61, the interim
43 years -- I would have to go back and look this up, but the
44 interim years would have been for a couple of years between when
45 the assessment terminal year was in 2017 and then when the first
46 year of projections was, which was either 2020 or 2021, and I
47 don't recall off the top of my head, but the first year of the
48 projection period would have been then, and then the SSC would

1 have recommended catches for a three to five-year period beyond
2 that point, but not further than that.

3
4 Then, when we did the interim analysis in 2021, the SSC
5 recommended a revised catch limit, but just for one year,
6 because it would have gone into effect, and then they would have
7 seen another interim analysis now this year, but they're not
8 recommending a change, based on what they've seen, this time.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

11
12 **MS. BOGGS:** I would like to rephrase my question, if I may.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You may.

15
16 **MS. BOGGS:** So when can we see the next catch recommendation
17 come out of the SSC for red grouper? Is that a better way to
18 phrase the question?

19
20 **DR. NANCE:** Well, as we do these interim analyses each year,
21 we're getting further and further away from the assessment
22 itself, and so, because of that, as I indicated, this interim
23 analysis is based on one index, the National Marine Fisheries
24 bottom longline, and so we're using that to follow what the
25 stock is doing, and it doesn't update recruitment, and it
26 doesn't update the size analysis or anything like that, and so,
27 as we get away from the assessment itself, we are becoming less
28 sure about what the stock is doing, with just one index.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan, let me just make sure, and I think what
31 you're asking -- So the next operational assessment of red
32 grouper is in 2024, and so, based on that assessment, then we'll
33 be able to provide new and updated catch advice, and does that
34 help?

35
36 **MS. BOGGS:** That's very helpful, and then I have another
37 question, but I think Dr. Porch has something to say.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Porch.

40
41 **DR. PORCH:** I just wanted to make sure that we're not getting
42 lost in a couple of points here. The reason why the catch limit
43 wasn't updated is because basically the index of abundance
44 didn't change very much, and so the interim approach works such
45 that, if the index goes up by X percent, then, essentially, the
46 catch limit could go up by X percent, or, if the index goes down
47 by Y percent, the catch limit would go down by that same
48 percent, more or less.

1
2 In this case, the index was flat, and so there's no reason to
3 change the catch limit from what it was before, but you could
4 change it every year, regardless of how far it is from the
5 assessment, because you're relying on what is really your most
6 reliable dataset for red grouper in this NMFS bottom longline
7 survey, but the gold standard would be to conduct another
8 assessment and update everything, but you can do an interim
9 analysis ten years after an assessment, and that's better than
10 just keeping the catch constant, because at least you're looking
11 at some real data, in close to real time. Thanks.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Porch. It looks like we have a
14 question from Mr. Anson.

15
16 **MR. ANSON:** That is what I wanted, I guess, further
17 clarification on, is my interpretation, through the first read
18 of the report, was that it was the SSC's recommendation not to
19 go beyond five years, but that was more related to the
20 projections and not looking since the last assessment was
21 created, and so Dr. Porch answered that question. Thank you.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Are there any -- Ms. Boggs.

24
25 **MS. BOGGS:** Just to clarify, so, in the last statement, where
26 you mentioned that there's no information presented on the
27 younger, smaller fish that are often selected by recreational
28 sector, that won't be incorporated until the next operational
29 assessment in 2024, I mean, or is that -- That's the next time
30 we'll see that factored in?

31
32 **DR. NANCE:** That would be factored in in the assessment,
33 because, right now, we're just using the NMFS bottom longline.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

36
37 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** I would like to make a recommendation that
38 we bring up Tab B, Number 9(b), I think it is, the interim
39 analysis, and I think it would just be helpful to show the
40 graphic here as well.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Let's see if we can get that up on the
43 board.

44
45 **MR. STRELCHECK:** If you go to page 12. I think we are getting
46 confused a little bit, in terms of the time series, but the
47 bottom line is the interim analysis obviously is looking at a
48 trend in abundance, the bottom longline survey. If that bottom

1 longline survey is representative of the red grouper population
2 as a whole, right, and, if it goes up, then we potentially can
3 increase catches. If it goes down, we would decrease catches.

4
5 In this instance, whether you're looking at a three or five-year
6 time series, there wasn't a lot of evidence before the SSC to
7 say we should be increasing the catch, or decreasing the catch,
8 and so that's where their advice came from, in terms of
9 maintaining it status quo for the time being, and so I just
10 wanted to note that, and, obviously, you can see it's been very
11 flat since 2013 and 2014.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Andy, for pointing that out to
14 folks. Is there any other questions for Dr. Nance with regard
15 to the SSC's discussion on the red grouper interim analysis?
16 Okay. I am not seeing any. Dr. Nance, thank you again.

17
18 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Mr. Chair, we've got about ten
21 minutes left, and I'm not sure I can accomplish much in that
22 time, but I'm sure I'm likely to mess something up, if you give
23 me ten minutes.

24
25 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** I have a lot more faith in you than that, Tom,
26 but I think I've kept this council past our working time a lot
27 more often than we've knocked-off early, and, in fact, I think
28 this will only be the second time, and so I propose that we call
29 it a day at this point, and we start back up in the morning with
30 Reef Fish, at 8:00 a.m.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

33
34 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you. I'll see everybody at 8:00 a.m.

35
36 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed on January 30, 2023.)

37
38 - - -

39
40 January 31, 2023

41
42 TUESDAY MORNING SESSION

43
44 - - -

45
46 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
47 Management Council reconvened at the Hilton Baton Rouge in Baton
48 Rouge, Louisiana on Tuesday morning, January 31, 2023, and was

1 called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

2
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We will jump right into the IFQ Focus Group
4 discussion, and we're going to let Dr. Lasseter work through the
5 action guide.

6
7 **IFQ FOCUS GROUP**

8
9 **DR. AVA LASSETER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Good
10 morning, everyone. This morning, we have a series of
11 presentations, and then we'll turn it over to the committee for
12 discussion, and so we held the second facilitated meeting of the
13 focus group on November 30 and December 1, and so, first up, we
14 have one of the facilitators with us who will provide a brief
15 summary of the meeting.

16
17 One of the themes that come up during the meeting that the focus
18 group members were interested in was adaptive catch shares, and
19 so one of the focus group members, who was our knowledgeable
20 non-participant, Dr. Andrew Ropicki, is here today, and he will
21 make a presentation on this adaptive catch shares management
22 approach.

23
24 Then we have SERO staff that are going to present the proposed
25 IFQ-related issues list of potential changes to you, and then
26 we'll open it up for discussion and hope that -- We're looking
27 for recommendations on what part of this list you are interested
28 in pursuing and discussion as to when you would like to address
29 this, whether a special Reef Fish Committee meeting is warranted
30 or whether we will continue to work on this through the Reef
31 Fish Committee, and I will turn it over now to Ms. Joy Hazell
32 from the Natural Resources Leadership Institute at the
33 University of Florida, and she's going to summarize the second
34 IFQ Focus Group meeting. Thank you.

35
36 **PRESENTATION: NOVEMBER 2022 FOCUS GROUP MEETING**

37
38 **MS. JOY HAZELL:** Good morning, everybody. Before we get
39 started, I would like just a show of hands of who was able to be
40 online and listen to the IFQ Focus Group meeting or was present.
41 Okay, and so a few of you, but not all of you, and I just wanted
42 to get a sense of how much information you had. Obviously,
43 there's a report in your packet, which is going to go into
44 significantly more detail than I'm going to go into right now,
45 and I'm just going to give you a brief overview of what happened
46 during the meeting.

47
48 Just as a reminder, the meeting took place at the council

1 headquarters in Tampa, Florida, on November 30 and December 1.
2 We had eight members, and the public participant was not
3 present, and we were informed, during the meeting, that the
4 public participant has actually sold his shares, and so these
5 are the participants who were here.

6
7 You gave us all a meeting charge, and this is a little bit hard
8 to read. What we focused on, as facilitators, was the meeting
9 charge that was in bold, because we had somewhat addressed the
10 first two meeting goals in the previous meeting, and so that was
11 how we focused this meeting down the two days, and so, just to
12 remind us, in case people can't read it, because it is small,
13 the council is considering changes to assist new entrants, i.e.,
14 replacement fishermen, to the IFQ program.

15
16 What would such program changes look like, and what would be the
17 implications of those changes, and we looked at implications as
18 potential benefits and drawbacks, which you then asked us to
19 evaluate the benefits and drawbacks to get active fishermen who
20 own no shares an increase in annual allocation, not shares, and
21 allocation held by the agency in non-active accounts.

22
23 The way we did this, we actually spent the first morning kind of
24 reminding ourselves what we had done in the previous meeting,
25 and then we tasked the meeting participants, the focus group
26 members, with envisioning a scenario five years in the future,
27 and scenario planning is a very common tool used for strategic
28 planning.

29
30 It allows for creativity, and it decreases ownership in the
31 outcome, because you're thinking in the future, and it has been
32 used in military planning for years, and it was used in post-
33 apartheid South Africa, and it was used it was used during the
34 oil crisis in the 1970s, which some of us probably don't
35 remember, but some of us do remember the oil crisis in the
36 1970s, where you had to wait in gas lines for many years, or
37 many hours, and Shell Oil Company had done scenario planning,
38 and they were the only company who actually did well during that
39 crisis, and so just to give you a little sense of why we use
40 this tool, and the scenario we started with was a scenario where
41 it was easier for replacement and/or active fishermen to obtain
42 shares or allocation, and we split them into two groups to
43 discuss this.

44
45 The reason we break them into groups is you get more
46 participation with less people, and it's that simple, and so
47 Group 1 envisioned a scenario where quota was increased by
48 70,000 pounds, and there was an adaptive management cycle, and

1 fishermen controlled shares and allocation. Group 2 discussed
2 that public participants were required to divest their shares or
3 acquire a permit in order to keep their shares, and so there was
4 two different conversations.

5
6 We then came back as a group and reported-out each scenario,
7 each group's scenario, and we looked for commonalities, and the
8 commonalities were this concept of having a permit requirement
9 to own shares and with that permit requirement having a minimal
10 landing requirement, and we actually discussed those two things
11 in-depth over the next two days.

12
13 Some challenges were a question of whether this would change the
14 program in a meaningful way and this outstanding question, which
15 was still outstanding at the end of the two days, of what is the
16 minimal landing requirement. We then had them do another
17 scenario, and this is common, to do various scenarios, and I
18 want to remind us all that the reason we do various scenarios is
19 because every decision that is made, or every decision that is
20 not made, leads to future outcomes, and so we wanted to explore
21 different possible outcomes, based on different decisions, and
22 so this was where the IFQ system is not changed, and so rules
23 and structures. It's 2029, but rules and structures are the
24 same as they were in 2022, and what does that look like?

25
26 Interestingly, the two groups came up with completely different
27 scenarios, which is not uncommon, and was actually kind of
28 exciting, from a facilitator standpoint, and so, in the first
29 group, they envision that there would be no independent owner-
30 operators and that corporations own the vast majority of the
31 fisheries, and they even discussed the potential for foreign
32 investors to own the vast majority of the fisheries.

33
34 Group 2, which was my group, went a little bit off-script,
35 because they had a sort of outstanding question about the
36 stability of the markets, because they have concerns of what the
37 instability of the market does to the share market and leasing,
38 and so we charged them with assuming that it is stable, and
39 their outcome was that banks would actually secure loans,
40 because there was a stable market, and that that would be
41 cheaper than leasing.

42
43 Then there was a long discussion on how you define this next
44 generation of fishermen and this inclusion of landings
45 requirement and what that might look like.

46
47 We then brought the groups back together, and we did discuss
48 this concept of a landing requirement, and so then we, per the

1 charge of the council, we talked about -- This is the
2 discussion. The discussion was around this idea of a permit
3 requirement with a percentage required to land, and the number
4 we decided on for discussion only, and this was not a number
5 that was accepted across-the-board as the appropriate number,
6 but it was for discussion, was they were required to land 10
7 percent of their allocation.

8
9 We had a discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of that, and
10 they created a runway to divest and to address inheritance
11 issues. They felt that it was unlikely that the leasing market
12 would lock up, and they felt it was a step in the right
13 direction and that it would cause share owners to have skin in
14 the game. Some folks said they said it was the best -- They
15 were concerned about stability, and it was the best stability
16 that could bring about change, and it would limit pure
17 speculators. It opens up more shares, and it's a step in the
18 right direction.

19
20 We also discussed some drawbacks, and there was a question on
21 timing, how quickly it would get shares to share opportunities
22 to allocation-dependent fishermen, and there was concern that
23 there would be less allocation available for lease. It doesn't
24 address discards and that, by requiring permits, it could
25 increase the cost of permits, and it could also disrupt leasing,
26 and this questions of is 10 percent too low, and so this number
27 was a big point of discussion amongst the group. Is 10 percent
28 too low, or is 25 percent too high, et cetera?

29
30 Then we went on to discuss this other charge from the council of
31 what would happen if increases in annual allocation were not
32 distributed to existing shareholders, and, instead, were
33 distributed evenly among active fishermen, okay, and so that
34 would include shareholders that were active fishermen, but it
35 would also include lease-dependent fishermen, and, again,
36 drawbacks and benefits, and the drawbacks are the shareholders
37 will get a lower increase than they would in the current system,
38 and there was this outstanding question of whether it would be
39 used for discards or direct catch.

40
41 The benefits were that it could be used for research to curb
42 discards, and it could be allowed for this new entrants to get
43 some shares. It could increase access to fish, reduce the race
44 for fish, and create a financial benefit for active fishermen.

45
46 There were many questions that are outstanding that need to be
47 addressed. How are new entrants defined, and there were
48 questions of is it one to three years, is it folks who are

1 already leasing, is it captains, and what about crew members, et
2 cetera, and so this idea of lease-dependent fishermen, rather
3 than new entrants, and what do we do to address latent permits,
4 and I believe somebody actually came up with a number of what
5 the latent permits look like there, and how does this deal with
6 the next-generation crew working their way up?

7
8 We then sort of went back to this question about permit
9 requirements and had some final thoughts from the group. Again,
10 this idea that there would be no speculators, and there was -- I
11 don't want to say there was consensus, but I think there was
12 universal interest in this idea of permit requirements, and let
13 me put it that way, that owner-operators would be in control,
14 they would make more money, and there was still this outstanding
15 question about adaptive catch shares, and Andrew will be coming
16 up and speaking on this in a second, because we did not get to
17 that discussion, and some folks were really disappointed that we
18 weren't able to get to that discussion.

19
20 I think this is the next slide, but I also want to make a note
21 that you all asked us to look at drawbacks and benefits, and, of
22 course, in these, the drawback to one person could be a benefit
23 to another, and so they weren't absolute, and so that was a lot
24 of the discussion, that one person felt it was a good thing, and
25 it was not a good thing to another member of this group.

26
27 Some themes that came up was this question about defining new
28 entrants, whether it was lease-dependent or new entrants, and
29 this recognition that people participate in different ways, and
30 there is plenty of outstanding questions, and this is what I
31 mentioned that I think is really important, that a benefit to
32 one could be a drawback to another. There was general support
33 for a permit requirement, but the 10 percent value did not have
34 full consensus, and this buyback of shares and permits were
35 frequently mentioned. I believe that was my last slide.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Joy. I appreciate that
38 presentation, and so I guess we'll open it up for a few
39 questions before we move on to Dr. Ropicki. Is there any
40 questions for Ms. Hazell? Mr. Gill.

41
42 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Joy, and
43 thank you, Wendy-Lin. I think you all put a lot of work into
44 that and were instrumental in carrying it through, and so I have
45 two questions for you. Since you've done 23,000 facilitations,
46 or thereabouts, how would you rate this one, in terms of
47 difficulty, or getting to an endpoint, and, you know, was it
48 average, or was it worse, or was it better?

1
2 **MS. HAZELL:** I would say it was a little worse than average, and
3 I can give you my why, if that's --

4
5 **MR. GILL:** Yes.

6
7 **MS. HAZELL:** I can put it in with a bunch that were in the same
8 category, and so I don't want to indicate that I haven't dealt
9 with this, but, number one, this is a long-standing issue,
10 right, and this is multiple years in the making, where people
11 have already had discussions, and they've had lots of these
12 conversations already, and so it's hard to get a jump on that,
13 and an example I would give you was I did something to build a
14 habitat management plan for Lakeland, Florida, that was twenty
15 years in the making. The conflict was twenty years in the
16 making, and it took two years.

17
18 It took probably several meetings just to get to the point where
19 people trusted each other, and that's through nobody's fault,
20 but that length of time of a conflict will increase the
21 difficulty of these processes, and so I think that's probably
22 the biggest reason.

23
24 **MR. GILL:** Thank you for that observation, and so the other
25 question is your expertise is in facilitation, and I understand,
26 you know, you're not an expert in IFQs, but, from the
27 perspective of holding those two meetings with Wendy-Lin, would
28 you offer any suggestions as to what the council might have done
29 better to help set them up to get to a more definitive endpoint,
30 and, if you would, be frank.

31
32 **MS. HAZELL:** Okay. Thank you for not asking what I would
33 recommend the council do, which was actually my biggest fear,
34 and so, if anybody asks that, my answer is I'm a facilitator,
35 and I don't have an answer to that, and I'm impartial.

36
37 It's a really interesting question. I think more time, giving
38 folks more time to discuss, recognizing that people -- You know,
39 people have jobs and lives that they have to get to, would be
40 the first one, and I'm trying to give it really good thought,
41 and yet answer quickly, which is a challenge, right, and, you
42 know, one of the ways would have been -- You did it to a certain
43 extent in the end, but to offer specific changes that they could
44 then deliberate, as opposed to having them come up with the
45 changes specifically, and I think, when you got to questions
46 where they were able to deliberate benefits and drawbacks,
47 that's when the discussion became really rich.

1 I think, when it's wide open, it becomes a little more
2 challenging, and we did discuss that a little bit, in talking to
3 NMFS and seeing what challenges they might want to explore, and
4 I think that might have helped it.

5
6 I think, also, potentially having larger groups of people.
7 There's a limit to the number of people that you can have in
8 there, where it starts getting a little bit unwieldy, and I've
9 done meetings with 120 people, and I would not recommend it,
10 but, you know, maybe twenty or thirty people, representing
11 different groups, might have -- I don't want to -- It was
12 brought up, and it's written in the report, and so I want to
13 sort of acknowledge that people come to these meetings with
14 their positions pretty well entrenched, and the goal is to get
15 people to the point where they are free, and they become
16 entrenched for a variety of very good reasons, and so the point
17 is to get people to the point where they're free to negotiate
18 all the different potential possibilities, and so more people
19 might have created cover for that entrenchment.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

22
23 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, and thank you, Joy, for the presentation,
24 and I will be the first one to say that I was not a proponent of
25 this second meeting, but I am pleased to see the outcome, and I
26 think it seemed to be a little organized, maybe, than the first
27 meeting, and, based on your comments that you just made, the
28 better direction, and I do agree with you. This has been a long
29 time coming, and you're right that it has festered, so to speak,
30 but I was glad to see this report, and I'm glad to see the
31 outcome, and I think it was much more productive than the first
32 meeting, and that's why I wasn't so supportive of going into the
33 second meeting, and so thank you for this.

34
35 **MS. HAZELL:** I will say that's not uncommon. The first meeting
36 is really all about trust building also, and so it's hard to be
37 productive at that point. By the second meeting, people have a
38 sense of each other, and it does get more productive as time
39 goes on.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Are there any other questions for Joy?
42 All right. Joy, I'm not seeing any right now, and so thank you
43 very much for that presentation.

44
45 **MS. HAZELL:** Thank you.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so next on our list is Dr.
48 Andrew Ropicki. He's going to talk to us a little bit about

1 adaptive catch shares. Welcome, Andrew.

2
3 **PRESENTATION: ADAPTIVE CATCH SHARES**
4

5 **DR. ANDREW ROPICKI:** Thank you. As Joy mentioned, we -- You
6 know, this was a pretty big task for such a short period of
7 time, and this was a topic that came up, adaptive catch shares,
8 but it didn't really get to get addressed, and, in the public
9 comments, there was a lot of interest from the fishermen, and so
10 I was asked to come and talk on it a little bit, speak on it.

11
12 This is just going to be a very brief overview, because it's a
13 complicated topic, where I could talk all day, and I'm sure no
14 one wants to listen to that, and so I will briefly describe and
15 go through a couple of very simplified examples and then kind of
16 talk about, you know, potentially how it might change the market
17 for share and allocation, and that will pretty much be it.

18
19 It's a tricky topic to cover, before I get into it too far, just
20 because I ran this by some other economists, and kind of changed
21 my presentation a few times, because it was kind of like I would
22 make a more finite point on something, and they would go, well,
23 that's at the end, after you, you know, maybe hit a steady
24 state, where there adaptation process has led to fishermen
25 owning their share, or owning their harvest privilege, or that's
26 too fine a point, and that's when they're in this transition
27 phase.

28
29 The background of what is adaptive catch shares, and, well, it's
30 a system designed to address the frequently-raised issues with
31 catch shares programs, kind of what we were tasked with here,
32 just barriers to new entrants, and also the idea that, you know,
33 a lot of catch shares -- You create this perpetuity, a perpetual
34 asset, and it's based on a one-time free distribution of shares,
35 based on catch history during a single review period, and that
36 has led to, as the National Academy report pointed out, issues
37 with intergenerational wealth trends, and, you know, it kind of
38 sticks with that first group, and you have second and third
39 generations that might be allocation-dependent, that lease their
40 rights.

41
42 Then, thirdly, it's designed to deal with this idea of absentee
43 ownership. You know, your external investors, those folks who
44 don't actually fish, who just saw it as an investment, and, in
45 addition to that group, you have, you know, fishermen, as they
46 retire, who, instead of truly leaving the fishery, they still
47 own their share, and they sell it as allocation, and so it's
48 designed to address all three of those, and the way it works is,

1 you know, you had your one-time initial distribution, and, well,
2 you just kind of do that every so often.

3
4 You have these cycles where you reallocate shares to the
5 participants that are actually actively harvesting fish, and,
6 you know, at its most basic, at the end of each cycle, a
7 predetermined portion of shares are reclaimed from each account
8 and redistributed among accounts based on their proportion of
9 landings, and so it's kind of like the first go-round of
10 distribution of shares, only you do it cyclically, and the idea
11 is that more of the ownership stays with those actually
12 harvesting.

13
14 System design considerations, there are some pretty big ones
15 here. You know, you need to think about the cycle and how long
16 of a period are you going to look at in determining the period
17 of time that is up for consideration for a change, and what I've
18 done here, in those first three bars, if you think about a ten-
19 year time horizon, you know, the first one would be a one-year
20 cycle, and so, every year, some proportion of the catch would be
21 redistributed based on what was caught in the previous year.
22 The second one would be every two years, and the third one would
23 be a longer cycle, every five years.

24
25 Additionally, you can think about a constant versus changing
26 cycle length, and, you know, you could start with a very long
27 cycle, and then kind of work your way down to a shorter cycle,
28 or the opposite is a potential way to go. You could start with
29 a short cycle, if you want to see how it's going to go first,
30 before you really dive in, and then you kind of spread it out
31 through time.

32
33 The other big decision that needs to be made is the reclamation
34 proportion, how much of those shares are going to be collected
35 for redistribution at the end of each cycle, and you can go --
36 You know, zero percent would be just catch shares as we know it,
37 and 100 percent would be, you know, fully turning over the
38 ownership every cycle.

39
40 Similar to the cycle lengths, with the reclamation proportion,
41 you can think about constant versus changing cycles, and so you
42 could do a big first cycle and then kind of, through time, go
43 smaller and smaller, where the idea here might be that, you
44 know, as you get the share into the hands of the people actually
45 harvesting, you get to a point where the redistribution cycles
46 can be -- The reclamation proportion can be smaller, because
47 it's just catch balancing, is what they're doing, is trying to
48 match their portfolio of shares and what they're actually

1 landing.

2
3 The opposite end of that is you could start small, if you want
4 to test it out, and then go bigger and bigger, through time.
5 Other considerations are harvest rules for multiyear cycles, and
6 so, if you're going to do a five or ten-year cycle, you've got
7 options of you could do all years, or you could do the best
8 three of five, in terms of their landings, determining what
9 portion they're going to get, and the idea here would be, by
10 looking at the best years, you leave the potential for a
11 fisherman who say has health issues in one year, or maybe their
12 vessel broke down, and they're not penalized, when you use the
13 best years, as opposed to all years.

14
15 You can also look at percentage of landings versus number of
16 pounds landed, and the examples that I have today are the basic
17 number of pounds landed, but you could also look at it -- You
18 know, you have those years where a smaller percentage of the
19 total commercial quota is caught, and you could look at it in
20 terms of percentage of landings each year, and then, lastly, you
21 have to figure out how to deal with changes in commercial quota,
22 and so, you know, we kind of go up and down through time, based
23 on how the stock is doing, and those need to be accounted for in
24 determining what your system is going to look like. You know,
25 are you going to redistribute those to the original owner or to
26 the person receiving the adaptive catch shares, and so that's
27 another design consideration.

28
29 These design considerations will determine how quota markets,
30 both the share and allocation market, will change, and they will
31 change. I mean, it's a pretty drastic change to how the fishery
32 is managed, when you think about implementing an adaptive catch
33 share system.

34
35 The first example I have, and I'm just going to go through a
36 couple of these, just to show you how it would work, and this is
37 a short cycle, one year, with a low reclamation proportion, and
38 so a one-year cycle, and, each year, 2 percent of the share is
39 reclaimed, and, for the simplicity of going through this, I just
40 have five fishermen in this fishery, and, instead of doing it on
41 percentage of share, we did it in share pounds, because that's
42 kind of the nomenclature in the fishery, you know, and you
43 usually trade pounds, and so, for simplicity, but it's a pretty
44 simple example.

45
46 You will see that one of my fishermen owns 50,000 of the 100,000
47 total, and, well, that's a 50 percent share, if you want to
48 think about it that way.

1
2 For this example, what we're doing is we're starting with
3 beginning share ownership is where they are when we're moving to
4 adaptive catch shares, and, as you can see, we have five
5 fishermen, four of whom own share and one who is an allocation-
6 dependent fisherman and has no ownership.

7
8 What we do is we look at their year-one landings, and, in year-
9 one, we have them harvesting the entire amount, and we have our
10 reclamation, and I'm just going through this fast, because I'm
11 going to go through each individual fisherman's year-one on its
12 own in the next few slides, but we have how much is reclaimed
13 and then how much is redistributed based on what they caught,
14 and so Fisherman 1 started with 50,000 pounds, and 2 percent of
15 that goes up for redistribution, 1,000 of his pounds, and he
16 catches 30,000 pounds, and so he's caught 30 percent of the
17 total quota, and so that pot up for reclamation is 2,000 pounds
18 is going to be distributed, and he's going to get 30 percent of
19 that, and so he's going to get 600 pounds, and so you take --
20 Well, let me just go to the next slide that's basically
21 describing it.

22
23 He started with 50,000 pounds of share, and 1,000 pounds of his
24 share was reclaimed, and that's 2 percent of his 50,000 pounds.
25 This fisherman had 30 percent of total landings, and so he was
26 redistributed 600 pounds, in this example, and so that 30
27 percent of the total redistributed is where we get the 600 from,
28 and so his net -- He starts year-two with 49,600 pounds, and
29 1,000 is redistributed, and he recollects 600, based on what he
30 actually landed.

31
32 Fisherman 2, we can think of this as someone who maybe doesn't
33 trade allocation, at least in this first example, and they're
34 someone who they have the quota they want to fish, the exact
35 number, in terms of pounds, and they go out and fish it, and
36 that's where they are.

37
38 They start with 20,000 pounds of share, and 400 pounds of share
39 is put up for redistribution, and that's 13 percent of 20,000,
40 but, for this fisherman, because they make up 20 percent of
41 total landings, they get 400 pounds right back, and so they end
42 up, net, they're the same they were before, you know, and this
43 is just a fisherman that's going to stay the same, because
44 they're catching their fish. Fisherman 3 -- Question.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

47
48 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for recognizing me, but I

1 didn't want to get ahead, because -- Can you go back to --

2

3 **DR. ROPICKI:** Yes.

4

5 **MS. BOGGS:** The Fisherman 1 year-one outcome, and so explain to
6 me the 30 percent, and how did we get to the 600, because my
7 math is not adding up, because I don't understand where the
8 2,000 pounds came from.

9

10 **DR. ROPICKI:** Okay. Perfect. If we go back, and sorry about
11 that. I maybe was going a little too fast. If you look at the
12 beginning share ownership, you know, you've got Fisherman 1 has
13 50,000 pounds, and Fishermen 2 has 20,000, 3 has 20,000, and 4
14 has 10,000, and so that first column.

15

16 We've got 100,000 pounds total of share, and we have a 2 percent
17 reclamation, and so 2,000 pounds, 2 percent of 100,000, is where
18 our 2 percent comes from, and then, because he caught 30,000 of
19 the 100,000 that was caught, he is entitled to 600 of those
20 pounds, that 30 percent.

21

22 While we're back here, I will just point out that, if you look
23 at year-two landings, it's important to note that how it's
24 redistributed is based on what is landed and not on the size of
25 the commercial quota, and so their percentages there -- Like,
26 for instance, Fisher 2, or however you want to describe him, a
27 pure fisherman who doesn't trade allocation, well, in this year,
28 he caught -- In year-two, he caught all 20,000 pounds of his
29 share, his allocation, for that year, but the fishery as a whole
30 only caught 95,000 pounds, and so what happens here is he still
31 gets 400 pounds reclaimed, and that's based on the share
32 ownership, the percentage reclamation, but he actually comes out
33 a little bit ahead in the distribution, because his 20,000
34 pounds is a little more than 20 percent, because they didn't
35 catch the whole thing, the full quota, that year. That's
36 Fisherman 2.

37

38 Fisherman 3 is our public participant, or it could be a retired
39 fisherman, and it's someone who is no longer actively fishing,
40 and they started with 20,000 pounds of share, the same as
41 Fisherman 2, and that's 20 percent of the total quota, and so
42 they're going to be 400 pounds, if you want to think of that,
43 back into the pot to be redistributed, but, with Fisherman 3,
44 there's no landings, and so they don't get anything back at this
45 time. Fisherman 3 has no landings, and, as such, was not
46 redistributed any of his share, and so his 20,000 for year-two
47 becomes 19,600, in this scenario.

48

1 Fisherman 4 started with 10,000 pounds of share, 10 percent of
2 the total quota, and so he's going to put up 2 percent of that,
3 200 pounds, and, now, Fisherman 4 is -- You know, he's not
4 completely allocation-dependent, but he does rely on allocation.
5 You know, if he caught -- He owns 10 percent of the share, but
6 he caught 21.64 percent of the total landings, and I apologize
7 that the numbers got away from me in this example, and I wish it
8 was 22, or just flat, but he has 21.64 percent of the total
9 landings, and so he's going to be redistributed 433 shares, and
10 so that is 21.64 percent of the 2,000 pounds being
11 redistributed.

12
13 He's going to start year-two -- Because he's actively involved
14 in the fishery, he's going to come ahead on this, and so he's
15 going to put 200 in and get 433 out and be a little ahead to
16 start year-two.

17
18 Fisherman 5 was our completely allocation-dependent fisherman,
19 and he had zero pounds of share, none of the quota, and so this
20 fisherman doesn't have anything to put in the pot in year-one.
21 There's nothing there, but he landed almost twenty-eight-and-a-
22 half percent of the total landings, and so he was redistributed
23 567 pounds, and so that's 28.36 percent of the 2,000 pounds up
24 for redistribution, and, in year-two, he now has ownership, and
25 so he will put some into the pot for redistribution in year-two,
26 and it's a small amount, and he's still very much allocation-
27 dependent, but now he has an ownership state.

28
29 He might have share which he -- You know, even at these low
30 reclamation rates in this example, you could have a fisherman
31 who this is the capital they need to go out and get a loan and
32 buy more quota. Maybe this is how they build into the fishery,
33 because, at the very end, I am going to show you, at low
34 reclamation rates, a fisherman, ten years in, who starts
35 completely allocation dependent, is still going to be pretty
36 allocation dependent, and I know it's good to see the numbers,
37 and you will see them in a minute.

38
39 Example 2, we go with a longer cycle with a higher reclamation
40 proportion, and this is a five-year cycle with 25 percent of
41 share reclaimed. We have five fishers. Well, this is kind of
42 the same thing, and it's a five-fisher example, and I'm still
43 doing it in share pounds, for ease of interpretation.

44
45 They started out with the same beginning -- Well, I'll tell you
46 what I'm going to do, and I'm going to go to the next slide,
47 because this is really busy, but the total pounds landed -- Just
48 trust me that the numbers on the next slide work out.

1
2 What we have is Fisherman 1 has 50,000 pounds. The proportion
3 of his ownership that's going to go up for reclamation is 50,000
4 times 25 percent, and so 12,500 of his pounds are up for
5 reclamation. Fisherman 2 and 3 and 4, you can see what they're
6 doing there, and the same 25 percent goes up, and we started
7 with 100,000 pounds of share, and so 25 percent, 25,000, goes
8 into the pot to be redistributed, based on catch history.
9
10 You can see their five-year landings, and what matters here is
11 the proportion of landings they accounted for, and so, in this
12 example, we're using all years, and this isn't the best three of
13 five, and I just kept it simple, but you can see their
14 proportional landings.
15
16 You take that proportion and multiply it by the 25,000, and you
17 figure out how much they're going to get redistributed, and so
18 Fisherman 1 has their initial 50,000, and they're half the total
19 commercial quota, and so they put in half of the share pounds up
20 for redistribution, the 12,500, and, because they are not
21 actively harvesting all of that, they get a percentage back, and
22 they actually get the biggest percentage back, because they are
23 the biggest fishermen, but it's not enough to match their
24 landings, because, generally, they lease out some of their catch
25 each year, or some of their share, as allocation.
26
27 You can see Fisherman 2 is a pure fisherman, but he, once again,
28 benefits from the idea that they didn't catch the total
29 commercial quota in every year, and he somehow did, and so he
30 comes out slightly ahead in this scenario. If they had caught
31 the entire quota, and he just caught his 20,000 pounds every
32 year, he would be in the same place he started.
33
34 Then Fisherman 3 is our public participant, or investor, and no
35 landings, and so he puts -- You know, a quarter of his shares go
36 up for redistribution, and all of them go out, because there's
37 no landings there, and so he ends the cycle with 15,000 pounds
38 to start the new cycle.
39
40 Our allocation-dependent fishers, with, you know, 5 being
41 completely allocation-dependent, you can kind of see their
42 outcome there, and they both have the same amount of landings,
43 but Fisherman 5 actually, you know, increases his ownership
44 more, because, at the beginning, he had nothing to put into the
45 pot, and he had no ownership, but he will start the next cycle
46 with 25 percent of that 5,670 pounds that he now owns
47 potentially up for redistribution.
48

1 Those were two very basic examples, and there's lots of ways
2 that you can change this as you go, and this is a slide that,
3 when I showed it to other economists, they got a little antsy,
4 and so I backed it up a little, but we can think about just some
5 basic things about potential impacts on quota markets, both the
6 share and allocation market, if you're going to go ahead and do
7 an adaptive catch shares program, and so the first point is
8 selling allocation becomes less attractive at a given allocation
9 price, and so let's just think about that.

10
11 If, prior to adaptive catch shares, the market allocation price,
12 the market lease price, is \$3.00 a pound, and then you go to
13 adaptive catch shares, where some of it is going to be
14 redistributed, well, that's attractive, to me, than someone
15 potentially leasing out quota, because, at \$3.00 a pound, yes, I
16 still get the same amount of allocation income, but, at the end
17 of the year, a little bit of my capital is going to go away in
18 my investment, and I'm going to lose whatever is reclaimed. If
19 we're thinking about a single -- I guess I should say at the end
20 of the cycle it's going to be reclaimed, and it doesn't have to
21 be a year.

22
23 Buying allocation and harvesting, and the "and harvesting" is
24 the important part here, becomes more attractive at a given
25 allocation price, and so think about the flip side of that. If
26 I was buying before at \$3.00 a pound, buying allocation at \$3.00
27 a pound before we did adaptive catch shares, well, I was just
28 getting the harvest privileges for this year. Now I'm getting
29 those harvest privileges at \$3.00 a pound and I've got -- You
30 know, at the end of the cycle, I'm going to get a little bit of
31 a share too, or I'm going to get some shares, depending on the
32 reclamation rate, and so both of these working together, at
33 least during, you know, a transition phase, before we get to
34 steady state, as the fishery is kind of recalibrating, would
35 have impacts. You know, both of those working together might
36 lead to a higher allocation price.

37
38 If selling allocation becomes less attractive, and buying
39 becomes more attractive, well, we might expect the supply to
40 drop a little, and the demand to go up a little, and that's a
41 recipe for a higher price, at least in the short-term. It's not
42 guaranteed, but it's a potential.

43
44 The third bullet point here is share ownership by non-fishers
45 becomes less attractive, and the allocation market may become
46 thinner, because, if you think about this, if you are a public
47 participant, whether you're a retired fisherman or an investor,
48 you know, when this program comes around, if you do adaptive

1 shares, you've got decisions to make, because your return on
2 investment is going to go down if you just keep leasing out like
3 you've been doing, because you're going to lose capital every
4 cycle.

5
6 You can either buy a boat and get a reef fish permit and go
7 harvest, if that becomes more palatable to you than selling it
8 as allocation, or you can sell your shares, and you can leave
9 the market, but, when you do that, if you think about it, the
10 person who is buying has that same disincentive to want to
11 continue selling allocation, and it's not like another person
12 who is going to come out and buy those people out is going to be
13 looking to lease it out. They're going to be looking to
14 harvest, more than likely.

15
16 You know, these non-fishers, you know, among active fishermen,
17 they are not -- You know, they're not happy about them, but they
18 do serve a purpose, currently. You know, if you don't actively
19 have the ability to -- If you own share, and you don't actively
20 have the ability to harvest, the only way this makes sense to
21 you is to sell allocation, and so you're providing liquidity to
22 that market, and so there is the chance that the market would
23 become thinner, the allocation market.

24
25 Then the last point is it's not -- It's one possible outcome,
26 but it's worth pointing out, because, you know, there might be
27 allocation-dependent fishermen watching this and saying this
28 sounds great, and the only problem is your reclamation
29 percentages are too low, and they should be higher, but there is
30 the potential that, if the reclamation percentage is high,
31 making that investment very -- Decreasing how public
32 participants see that investment, and it's just not worth it for
33 them, and they might all run to the exits.

34
35 If it's going to be taken away quickly, they might go to sell,
36 and, when they go to sell, who is going to buy? Well, it's
37 going to be fishermen who buy, and, if there are deep-pocketed
38 fishermen with the ability to, you know, catch the fish that
39 they're going to buy, you could see quite a bit of consolidation
40 and share ownership, and you would likely see harvest
41 consolidation in that instance, too.

42
43 Now, I just point this out, and, like I said, it's not
44 definitive, and there's a lot of moving parts and everything,
45 and, what's going to happen, I don't have a crystal ball, but I
46 think it's important to point out the idea that this is a
47 potential outcome.

48

1 If you think about this, we can think about these external
2 public participants, these investors, these retired fishermen,
3 and, if you think about the allocation price increasing, and not
4 necessarily that there's a cap on it, but we can think about
5 what would make them whole, in terms of how the allocation price
6 could change, and so it should be -- It's not the right title,
7 but we'll call it the Public Participant Return Example.

8
9 The first bullet point, I'm going to go through an example,
10 because that's a mouthful, but I based this off of an annual
11 cycle, because it's much easier. When you get to five years,
12 this becomes a trickier proposition to figure out, but an
13 investor should be indifferent between an annual cycle, or
14 someone leasing out quota should be indifferent between an
15 annual cycle adaptive catch shares system and a traditional
16 catch shares system, if there's an allocation price increase by
17 an amount equal to the reclamation rate multiplied by the market
18 share price, and that probably doesn't help, and so let's go
19 into our example.

20
21 Pre-adaptive catch shares, we'll assume we've got this market
22 where we have a market share price of \$25 a pound, and the
23 allocation price is \$2.00 a pound, and we have an investor, or a
24 public participant, who owns 100 pounds, and we're going to say
25 that quota price doesn't change, and the allocation price
26 doesn't change, within the pre-adaptive catch share setting, and
27 so the return on their investment is just that first term in
28 brackets there, the share value at the end of the year minus the
29 share value at the beginning of the year, and so that's how
30 their capital investment changes. If you're thinking about a
31 stock, that's how the price of the stock changed, or maybe they
32 had a stock split, but just the value of your holdings changes,
33 plus their allocation income, and that's where their revenue
34 comes from, and that's their dividend, so to speak.

35
36 In this example, no change in share value, as I said, but they
37 get their allocation income, and remember they have 100 pounds
38 of share, and they're leasing -- They're selling it as
39 allocation at \$2 a pound, and so they're going to make \$200.
40 The return is based on their initial investment, which was the
41 value of their investment at the beginning of the year, and they
42 had 100 pounds, \$25 a pound, and it's \$2,500, and so, in this
43 scenario, they have an 8 percent return.

44
45 With adaptive catch shares, if we think we go to adaptive catch
46 shares, and let's say the market share price stays at \$25 a
47 pound, and the market allocation price rises to two-and-a-
48 quarter, and we have a reclamation rate of 1 percent, and so a

1 very slow reclamation.

2

3 In this scenario, that investor, or that public participant, is
4 kind of in the same place they were before. If you think about
5 it, you know, they're going to lose 100 pounds, and they're
6 going to lose a pound, and so they're going to lose \$25 worth of
7 capital, at the end of the year, and so that first term, in
8 brackets, they lose \$25, but their allocation income goes up
9 \$25, and now, instead of getting \$200 for their 100 shares, they
10 get \$225, and it's the same 8 percent return, and so we can
11 think about kind of, you know, what changes in allocation prices
12 could mean to investors and what they're going to do, and so
13 this is just kind of an example of that.

14

15 Kind of the idea here is, you know, if you want to think about
16 it a little further, their \$225 in allocation income -- They
17 could take \$25 of it and buy the share back that they lose and
18 be in the same place they were under the non-adaptive strategy.
19 They would still own 100 pounds, and they would still have made
20 \$200 net in allocation income and have 100 pounds to lease out
21 the next year.

22

23 These are just a couple of quick slides, and I think it's
24 informative to see how it changes through time at different
25 reclamation rates, and so this is an example for an investor, or
26 a public participant, starting with 10,000 pounds of share who
27 is going to keep selling it as allocation, and so leasing it
28 out, and an allocation-dependent fisher that lands 10,000 pounds
29 of fish per year, and they start out with nothing, and so
30 they're completely lease dependent, and you can see how their
31 ownership changes.

32

33 At 1 percent, after ten or so years, it's not huge. It's less
34 than 10 percent, and you can see two and three, and I just -- I
35 felt like the numbers are kind of good to see, but you've got
36 those, and so you can look at them.

37

38 The same thing here, the ownership change rate, a five-year
39 cycle, and we have higher reclamation rates here, but, with the
40 longer cycle, what you see is that investor gets the change to
41 earn that allocation income for a longer period of time, and the
42 allocation-dependent fisher, while they will end up getting
43 more, they have to wait longer until they get it.

44

45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Hold on, Andrew. Ms. Boggs.

46

47 **MS. BOGGS:** I am sorry to keep interrupting, Tom, but I think
48 it's a good thing to ask the questions as we go with this, and

1 so, on Slide 17, or it doesn't matter which one, but, when
2 you're talking about the ownership change rate, and so, with the
3 reclamation, and then, on the far-right, for the allocation-
4 dependent fisher, that's what they will earn, and then those
5 will become their --

6
7 **DR. ROPICKI:** That's what they're -- If you're thinking about
8 the two sides of the coin, we have our investor, who is selling
9 his allocation to this allocation-dependent fisher, and those
10 two are the only ones who trade with each other, and it doesn't
11 have to be that way, but it's easier. If we think about it that
12 way, this is kind of how their pounds owned changes through
13 time, given, you know, a five-year cycle on this one, and a one-
14 year cycle on the other one, and the reclamation rates at the
15 top.

16
17 Just a couple of very basic remarks, and it's important to point
18 out that adaptive catch shares would lead to changes in the
19 share and allocation markets. There's no getting around it.
20 You're changing the nature of what people are buying and
21 selling.

22
23 It's a potential avenue for allocation-dependent fishers to
24 acquire share and kind of address some of those issues that have
25 been brought up with catch share systems, as I mentioned
26 earlier, and you can think of it a couple of ways. You know,
27 there is what the allocation-dependent fishers earn, in terms of
28 the redistributions, but there's also that access, and it could
29 potentially give them access to capital, because now they have
30 collateral for a loan. They have shares that they could use to
31 buy more shares.

32
33 As I said, you know, there is an outcome where it could lead to
34 quota and harvest consolidation, and it's worth pointing that
35 out, and, lastly, program design details would significantly
36 impact the outcomes for participants, and so there's -- You
37 know, those were two very basic examples, and there's a million
38 different ways that you could slide this thing up.

39
40 I just wanted to, really quickly, touch on one thing, and it's
41 more for the people in the back, and so this is kind of a one-
42 off, but we are doing IFQ pricing surveys and reports, and a lot
43 of you probably already know about them, and you get them from
44 me, but the idea here is, and I think Dr. Stephen will talk
45 about it a little bit in the next presentation, is kind of this
46 lack of access to data on prices, what's happening with share
47 and allocation and ex-vessel prices.

1 This is an industry-driven way of getting more information out
2 there, and so what I'm doing is I'm doing these surveys, asking
3 people about their trading activity, or what they've heard for
4 market prices in the last quarter, and then compiling it and
5 putting it into a report for everyone to see, and so we're kind
6 of crowdsourcing information on prices, is the idea, and these
7 surveys are emailed to IFQ participants who sign-up, quarterly,
8 and then, the following month, I release a report, that's
9 available on the Florida Sea Grant website, showing the pricing
10 data we gathered.

11
12 I've got a link there, if anyone wants to look at the first
13 couple of reports we did in 2022, or sign-up going forward, and,
14 once again, this is for the folks in the back of the room, and
15 just, lastly, it's going well. The people who are signed up,
16 I'm getting good response rates, but I just need more fishermen
17 and dealers and shareholders. If we can get the numbers up -- I
18 tried to make it as unintrusive as possible. It's short, and,
19 if you decide you get fed-up with it, the very question is do
20 you want to participate. There's an I agree to participate, and
21 there's a, no, I'm not going to do it this time, and then
22 there's a third of stop bothering me, and I don't want to
23 receive this ever again, and so it's completely anonymous.

24
25 Your data won't be shared, and it will just go into this report
26 where we can get a little more information out there on what's
27 happening in these markets, and so that's it, and I will take
28 any questions or comments.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Ropicki. We're
31 going to start out, and we've got a couple of folks. Susan
32 Boggs and then Kevin Anson.

33
34 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Dr. Ropicki. I really appreciate this,
35 and so the question is can you provide me with another fishery
36 that uses this type of management?

37
38 **DR. ROPICKI:** At this time, no. There are none that I'm aware
39 of.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Anson.

42
43 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you. Thank you, Dr. Ropicki, for the
44 presentation. I'm just curious, on that slide there, on the
45 participation, has that changed over time, as far as those that
46 are voluntarily providing the information in the recent years,
47 in the last couple two or three years?

48

1 **DR. ROPICKI:** I just started this last year, and so I've only
2 got two surveys, and I had a pretty good response rate. I've
3 made it -- I don't just want to blast-out an email, and so I
4 collect email addresses and sent them a personalized link to
5 respond to, and I just need more people to sign-up. Fishermen
6 are generally pretty about responding to surveys, even though
7 they hate them, relative to the general public, I guess.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Stunz.

10
11 **DR. GREG STUNZ:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Andrew, thanks for
12 doing this, and you really made it relatively easy to
13 understand. It's still very complex and a difficult situation,
14 and I appreciate you offering a solution to a big problem that
15 we have, and I have a couple of things, but, first, to follow-up
16 on Susan, and so, I guess, in this sense, this is kind of
17 blazing new ground, in the sense that other fisheries aren't
18 using that, but what was the origin, or is this something that
19 you conceptualized, or how did this come to be?

20
21 **DR. ROPICKI:** It was considered for the -- There are people in
22 the room who can correct me if I go astray here, but I think it
23 was considered for the charter/for-hire in the Gulf. If that's
24 wrong, please --

25
26 **DR. LASSETER:** Yes, and the Amendments 41 and 42 -- I think
27 Amendment 41 explores adaptive catch shares, yes, and I believe
28 there is other programs that do --

29
30 **DR. STUNZ:** I thought I understood that there wasn't. Your
31 question earlier was --

32
33 **DR. ROPICKI:** Ava, are you aware of other programs that use
34 adaptive --

35
36 **DR. LASSETER:** There is -- I'm looking at Assane now, and I have
37 read about somewhere that talks about cycles of use.

38
39 **DR. ASSANE DIAGNE:** Yes, and people are thinking about it, but,
40 as Andrew said, there are no practical applications, and it
41 hasn't been implemented, as far as I know.

42
43 **DR. STUNZ:** My real question here for you, Andrew, it is seems
44 like what you're proposing here is to, you know, limit the
45 negative impact on anyone in particular, but plenty of
46 opportunity for it to sort of find the best course, so to speak,
47 and so I appreciate that, but you sort of had a word of caution
48 about what could happen, potentially, in one of the scenarios,

1 if you someone that could rapidly buy this up, which I don't
2 know if that's necessarily a problem if they're actively fishing
3 them, and that's what we're trying to --
4

5 **DR. ROPICKI:** No, and that would -- You know, that would be --
6 It would reduce overcapacity in the fishery, which is a stated
7 goal. I kind of had that in there, thinking about fishermen,
8 and, while it's not a -- Like I said, in no way is that a
9 guaranteed outcome, and I think it's worth mentioning, because,
10 if you're allocation-dependent now, this could be something that
11 makes it harder to get allocation, and we won't get the
12 ownership you're looking for, and so I wanted to make that
13 point.
14

15 **DR. STUNZ:** Tom, just to -- All of that was leading to my main
16 question, because I wanted to make sure that I understood that
17 correctly, and so, if that's sort of some of the concerns, is
18 there value to having some cap, in terms of your ownership, or,
19 for example, when you initially start this -- So you have some
20 cap, and you initially start it, and if a lot of the issue, of
21 course, is speculation, some of the issues that folks are
22 talking about around the table, where you start the program
23 where you have to fish a certain percentage, just out of the
24 gate, because that seems, to me, that that would streamline the
25 speculation, but then I don't know if that curbs -- You know,
26 you don't want to curb the market or something, but I was just
27 wondering what were your thoughts on that.
28

29 **DR. ROPICKI:** Well, that idea of -- I mean, you don't have to do
30 these two together that way, and you could -- One of the things
31 that came out of the IFQ Focus Group was a requirement of a reef
32 fish permit and then landing at least some percentage of your
33 catch, and I think we had 10 percent, but some in the room felt
34 that was too low and such. I mean, I see those as kind of two
35 different ways to attack the same problem, and does that answer
36 it?
37

38 **DR. STUNZ:** I am just wondering if that had any -- I mean, that
39 may be an idea that could potentially fix some of what we might
40 perceive as maybe unintended consequences.
41

42 **DR. ROPICKI:** That is a potential solution as well, and I was
43 asked to present this, and so --
44

45 **DR. STUNZ:** No, I'm fine, and I'm just asking -- I'm just
46 throwing things out there, because we don't want to get into a
47 situation where it sounds great here, and then we implement it,
48 and we're like, time out, and we didn't plan for that, but,

1 anyway, and so I'm just wondering -- Doing something like that
2 might curb the free-market nature of what we're trying to --

3

4 **DR. ROPICKI:** It could potentially. I mean, that's -- Yes,
5 that's a potential way of doing it, is having a landings
6 requirement, or a permit requirement, or something like that, in
7 addition.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I see that Jessica Stephen has her hand up,
10 but, Jessica, before you go, I just want to follow-up, real
11 quick, on Greg's question, and so I will give you a
12 hypothetical, right, and so let's say you had a shareholder who
13 had 50,000 pounds, and we'll use your first scenario, and that
14 shareholder leased, you know, 30,000 pounds, and what happens
15 if, when you look at the landings, and perhaps an individual's
16 landings exceed a share cap, right, and so some of those shares
17 then, or pounds, in your examples, are returned to the pool, and
18 where do they go?

19

20 **DR. ROPICKI:** So that would be something that would have to be -
21 - As I mentioned, we did two very simple examples here, and so
22 you would likely -- I mean, obviously, they can't go above the
23 share cap, and so you would have to redistribute that somewhere
24 else, but yes.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Dr. Stephen.

27

28 **DR. JESSICA STEPHEN:** I do want to point out that HMS's bluefin
29 tuna individual bycatch quota program has started a version of
30 this adaptive catch shares in Amendment 13, and that started on
31 January 1 of this year, and so a little bit different, and they
32 don't have shares, in the traditional sense that we do, and they
33 have allocation associated with a permit, but they have started
34 this type of adaptive program.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Stephen. J.D.

37

38 **MR. J.D. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think some of my
39 question was answered, and I'm still a little bit confused, but
40 have you all had any discussion about an exact cap? I have some
41 of the same concerns that Dr. Stunz has, that you have to limit
42 -- There needs to be a limit somewhere, and I'm just wondering
43 if you all have had that discussion, because it's not anywhere
44 on the --

45

46 **DR. ROPICKI:** So a cap regarding --

47

48 **MR. DUGAS:** So Fisherman 1 or 2 eventually is going to continue

1 growing, as they're landing, and so, at some point --

2
3 **DR. ROPICKI:** You would have to account for that, yes, because
4 you do have -- Obviously, we already have a share cap in all
5 these fisheries, and so, once you hit the cap, you would have to
6 deal with that. There are other, you know, little nuances that
7 you would have to work out, because I'm sure, you know, the
8 system -- If you keep decreasing someone, even on a short cycle,
9 a few percent each time, they never hit zero, and, I mean,
10 that's the way percentages work, and so, at some point, you
11 would have to, you know, cut them off, because it becomes too
12 small to trade and things, and so there are lots of things you
13 would have to think about, and in terms of how it works related
14 to the share cap as well.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

17
18 **MR. ANDY STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Andrew, for the great
19 presentation. You know, going through my mind is, obviously,
20 the complexity of the program, and, obviously, there's been a
21 lot of questions and comments related to that, and one area that
22 I guess I'm thinking of is the reef fish fishery, pre-IFQ, and
23 now in the IFQ, has been fairly vertically integrated, you know,
24 with dealers and vessels, some that are owned by the dealer,
25 some that just work with that dealer, and so, you know, can you
26 speak to that and the complexity, or challenge, from an economic
27 standpoint, because, essentially, dealers, to me, would stand to
28 lose if they don't have the vessels themselves.

29
30 **DR. ROPICKI:** In this scenario, yes, that would be, obviously,
31 one of the drawbacks, because, if they don't have vessels tied
32 to their shareholder account, with an adaptive catch share
33 system, they wouldn't have landings to counteract the
34 redistributions.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Sweetman, did you have a question?

37
38 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Andy asked my exact question right there.
39 Thanks.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so I've got another one for
42 you, Dr. Ropicki, and, again, I appreciate this as an exercise,
43 right, and so I'm just trying to work through a couple of
44 scenarios, but let's say, for example, that there was a fishery
45 where the participants were affected by a hurricane, right, and
46 I know you probably don't have the answer, but how would you
47 consider ways to deal with disasters, or in years where there
48 were no income, or landings, through no fault of their own?

1
2 **DR. ROPICKI:** In those situations, you know, we go back to a
3 longer cycle length, five or ten years, and, if you do best
4 three of five, or best seven of ten, hopefully you can account
5 for that, and you could also have scenarios where the council,
6 or the management, can build-in protections for that.

7
8 It could be, if a -- Not a federal fishery disaster, but, if a
9 federal disaster has occurred, the fishermen in that area
10 somehow have a built-in protection, or something, for that year,
11 or some way to account for it. This was the most basic of
12 basic, and so, yes, there's lots of things that would have to be
13 considered prior to, you know, going in this direction.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Great. Thank you. Ms. Boggs.

16
17 **MS. BOGGS:** I don't know who this question would be for, and
18 maybe staff, because, moving forward, as we have these
19 discussions about the IFQ fishery, and as we develop ideas,
20 because I hadn't thought about the dealers, and so thank you,
21 Andy, for bringing that up, because it's so complex, and I still
22 have to figure out the shareholders -- You know, all the
23 different aspects of it, but my question is, as we come up with
24 scenarios, and I'm not saying every single one, but, if we were
25 to develop a document, and we have five scenarios, could we ask
26 someone like Dr. Ropicki to come back and do an analysis such as
27 this? I don't know, Ava, and is that something that you would
28 enlist, or is that something that staff can do? I don't know,
29 but this, to me, was very informative.

30
31 To Greg's point about unintended consequences, you know, we
32 already didn't think about the dealers in this situation, and
33 that would have been an unintended consequence, and so, if there
34 was a way we could -- If not Dr. Ropicki, but whomever could
35 play out these scenarios for us, so it's very clear what it is
36 we're trying to make a decision on and how it would affect the
37 different players in the scenarios.

38
39 **DR. LASSETER:** I guess I would perhaps ask everybody to take
40 kind of a step back from this and see this presentation as very
41 abstract high-order. This is not a proposal to you, and we're
42 not asking you to come and say, hey, yes, let's do this. The
43 focus group members were curious about these kinds of ideas, and
44 this has come up before, and so Dr. Ropicki offered to, you
45 know, come and present this. I think, in the next presentation,
46 we're going to talk, also more broadly, about types of changes
47 and whatnot.

1 If we get to goals and objectives, and if you start to be
2 interested in addressing some kind of a redistribution, or a
3 modification to the program, this is one potential path that
4 could be taken. If you then go down this path, there's a whole
5 bunch of other questions that would have to be asked, which
6 would have to be answered, with some already coming up, and Dr.
7 Ropicki is very interested in this program, and he is now
8 instituting, or implementing, this survey to monitor prices, and
9 so I think he's very engaged in the process, and he was one of
10 our members, and I am going to assume that he would be more than
11 willing to come and keep working with the council as well.

12
13 For those of you who maybe don't remember, also, Andrew was on
14 our Socioeconomic Panel, before we called it the SSC, right, and
15 I think it was still the SEP label, and so I think we have him
16 as a fantastic resource for the council. Thank you.

17
18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan.

19
20 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, so my point is we get a document, and we see
21 Action 1, Alternative -- Or Alternative 1, Action -- We don't
22 really know what that means. I mean, we see the graphs, and,
23 you know, this is what the catch is, and this is what it should
24 do, but this kind of played out the full scenario of what it is
25 we're looking at, and I think, with the IFQ fishery, it's more
26 complex than if we're just talking about a species of fish.

27
28 This kind of played out the scenario, and so, when we get to --
29 If it's this, the adaptive management, or whatever road we go
30 down, to see a clear -- I understand we can't play out every
31 scenario, and we can't what-if it to death, but, to me, this
32 kind of brought it to light of, okay, if we do this, this is how
33 it's going to affect the different people. I guess it's the
34 decision tool that we use with some of the species, and I just
35 think this is going to be such a long, arduous process, and we
36 want to get it as right as we possibly can, and I don't want to
37 say it's going to be perfect, but to see these types of
38 scenarios and just to see an alternative, just to give us more
39 something to look at real-time, so to speak.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Again, I would just say, you know, wherever we
42 go, right, if we get to a point where we're going to consider
43 something that we might use to make a decision, that we should
44 take every opportunity to kind of play out those scenarios,
45 right, to answer the what-ifs, and so, yes, I would agree that
46 that's important, and, ultimately, we'll get there, but I'm not
47 sure we're there yet. Mr. Strelcheck.

48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just to build upon the comments, this is a
2 solution, and it's not necessarily the solution, right, and
3 everyone recognizes that, and I think, you know, going back to
4 some comments that I made yesterday about allocation, but it
5 relates to this, what are the objectives, and what's the problem
6 that we're trying to solve here, and I think we still don't have
7 that clear vision, in terms of what the problem is and what
8 those specific objectives could be.

9
10 I wholeheartedly agree that if the solution, or if this is a
11 component of the solution, we would have to really come back
12 with a lot more detail and analysis and of weight the pros and
13 cons and scenarios that could be considered under this
14 particular option.

15
16 I'm hoping that, with Jessica's presentation coming up, we can
17 hone-in on kind of a path forward, and this is one component of
18 some of the ideas that my staff, working with the council, have
19 come together, but this might not be the preferred solution,
20 versus some of the options that were considered, and so just
21 kind of weigh that as you consider the next presentation.

22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Are there any additional
24 questions? Mr. Chair.

25
26 **MR. DALE DIAZ:** I don't have a question, but I just wanted to
27 thank you, Dr. Ropicki, for taking your time to serve on the IFQ
28 Focus Group. We appreciate you helping us with your time and
29 your expertise, and so we very much appreciate it.

30
31 **DR. ROPICKI:** Thank you. It was a lot of fun.

32
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andrew, it looks like Jessica Stephen has her
34 hand up again. Jessica.

35
36 **DR. STEPHEN:** Sorry. My hand should have been down.

37
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Ropicki. Mr.
39 Chair.

40
41 **MR. DIAZ:** This is not a question, but I was just informed that
42 the hotel is not going to shut the water off today, and so we
43 still can take -- When you think we're at a good point where we
44 can take a break at some point, just let me know, and we will
45 take a break.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think we should take one right now, and,
48 that way, we won't be in the middle of a presentation.

1
2 **MR. DIAZ:** Okay. Let's take a fifteen-minute break, and we'll
3 start back up at 9:30.

4
5 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
6

7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We will jump right into a presentation by Dr.
8 Stephen. Okay, Jessica. It looks like we've got the
9 presentation up, and the floor is yours.

10
11 **PRESENTATION: PROPOSED IFQ-RELATED ISSUES**
12

13 **DR. STEPHEN:** All right. Thank you very much. What I wanted to
14 do is discuss with you some potential changes for the IFQ
15 program, and we've worked together with council staff and agency
16 staff to kind of round-up some of these ideas.

17
18 Before we get started, I kind of want to review what the
19 program's goals and objectives were. For both programs, we had
20 a goal to reduce overcapacity as well as goals that aligned with
21 mitigating the race to fish, or the derby fishing conditions,
22 and those that we wanted to mitigate was in order to increase
23 the market stability, eliminate quota closures, increase the
24 flexibility for the fishermen, for the fishing operations,
25 improve the safety-at-sea, have cost-effective and enforceable
26 management of the IFQ species, and the last one is to balance
27 both the social, the economic, and the biological benefits
28 within the program as we make changes.

29
30 Just a review of what we've gone over with the IFQ program, and
31 I believe it was mentioned earlier, and this is kind of a long-
32 standing program, and it's been in place for sixteen years for
33 red snapper and thirteen years for grouper-tilefish. During
34 that time, we've had three different program reviews, and both
35 red snapper and grouper-tilefish had individual five-year
36 reviews, and then we created joint reviews, moving forward with
37 the programs together, because there's such a high degree of
38 overlap with the participants within each program.

39
40 Fairly recently, we also had the National Academy of Sciences
41 review of limited-access privilege programs in mixed-use
42 fisheries, and this was broader than just our Gulf programs, but
43 they did spend a lot of time on some of the examples and work
44 that we've seen in our Gulf programs.

45
46 We also have annual reports that the agency releases each year
47 for red snapper and grouper-tilefish, and, finally, there have
48 been a lot of recommendations from advisory panels, SSCs,

1 council meetings, and the IFQ Focus Group.

2
3 What I want to go over here is some of the reviews from the
4 joint review. The criteria you see are the criteria listed in
5 the national catch share policy that we evaluated as we go
6 through the reviews, and this is in order to compare programs
7 across different regions that have the same type of criteria.
8 I'm not going to spend a lot of times on these, but, if you see
9 a positive plus sign, in green, that meant we were doing very
10 well, and so, for data collection and share and allocation caps,
11 the review showed that we were doing fairly well, although there
12 are some areas that could use additional improvement.

13
14 If you see a minus sign, in red, that's an area where we still
15 are struggling to accomplish the goal, and, in this case, on
16 this one, it was participation, and we've had limited success in
17 reducing overcapacity, and we've actually seen increases in the
18 number of vessels harvesting red snapper, as well as increased
19 participation within the program and the different roles within
20 the program.

21
22 Two other criteria was the catch and sustainability, which we
23 were positive in with the review, and we have had year-round
24 fishing, and we haven't exceeded the ACLs, and we have a number
25 of flexibility measures that were used with great success, as
26 well as reducing the discards. Safety-at-sea was another large
27 improvement from the program, and this is largely driven by that
28 flexibility of the fishermen to choose when to go out and not be
29 confined to a short season, where they need to go out during
30 hazardous conditions.

31
32 Finally, the last two criteria was gathering information on
33 prices within the program, and that's for the shares,
34 allocations, and ex-vessel price, and what we've seen is there
35 definitely has been increased profitability within the
36 fisheries. We've seen ex-vessel prices start to stabilize, and,
37 while red snapper ex-vessel prices increased, there wasn't
38 really a similar trend in grouper-tilefish, and so that probably
39 has less to do with the catch share program and more to do with
40 the species itself.

41
42 Then the final category was new entrants, which we scored sort
43 of neutral on. Promoting new entrants seems to be a little bit
44 inconsistent with our goal of reducing overcapacity, and I think
45 we often think of new entrants as people are coming new into the
46 program, but, oftentimes, they are crew that have been in the
47 program, or hired captains, and so potentially we should be
48 substituting the language here as "replacement fishermen" that

1 are replacing fishermen that are exiting, with people who are
2 involved within the industry, either as crew or hired captains.

3
4 When we went through all the work, what we ended up doing is
5 trying to condense down the variety of ideas over the last
6 decade or so, to figure out what the main themes were, and we
7 came up with seven main themes, and I'm going to go through each
8 one individually and kind of give you a background on it and
9 some ideas for discussion.

10
11 The first theme is we were looking at the programs' goals and
12 objectives, which I just listed earlier, and the programs have
13 been very successful at meeting most of their goals, and we
14 wanted to think about how we wanted to change these goals and
15 objectives, and, remember, we created these thirteen to sixteen
16 years ago, and it's probably time that we start to update them.

17
18 I want to remind you that NMFS' policy says that our goals
19 should be clear, measurable, and achievable, and so, when
20 thinking about goals and objectives, I would like the council to
21 think about are there ways that we can redefine, or refine, any
22 existing goals that can make them more clear, measurable, and
23 achievable, and are there new goals, or new objectives, that we
24 would like to add in, or do we want to modify some of our
25 existing goals.

26
27 I mentioned that we've actually been successful at obtaining it,
28 and maybe we want to modify it, to say instead of obtaining,
29 that we want to sustain the goal that we have achieved. Another
30 thought is making sure that -- The last goal in the mitigating
31 derby fishing conditions was to balance social and economic
32 concerns, and so, when we're making our goals and objectives, we
33 need to think about how do we balance ideas like overcapacity
34 with other social or economic goals of the program, such as
35 expanding access to new people coming into the program or, as I
36 said before, replacement fishermen.

37
38 One of the main themes that kept coming up, over and over again,
39 was the idea of reducing IFQ discards, and you probably saw this
40 in the focus group's discussion as well. In general, the IFQ
41 program has been fairly successful at reducing discards that
42 were due to trip limits or seasonal closures, which were the
43 primary discards prior to the IFQ program. What remains, after
44 we had started the IFQ program, is that we have discards that
45 can still occur, due to size limits, and we start to get
46 discards of a new category. They were discarding them due to
47 the lack of allocation.

48

1 Keep in mind that these programs are part of the entire reef
2 fish fishery, and that means that you can have discards that are
3 occurring across the entire fishery, and you might want to focus
4 on one or two species or the program as a whole. In general,
5 the IFQ program has been very successful at reducing discards
6 within the fishery.

7
8 Some of that was the built-in functionality that we built into
9 the program, and so, for example, we built in the gag and red
10 grouper multiuse that allows those categories to be used to
11 harvest either gag or red grouper. We also have some
12 flexibility measures for some shallow-water and deepwater
13 grouper species that allows them to be landed in the other
14 category, and we have a 10 percent overage measure that's
15 allowed for people who hold shares within the system.

16
17 When thinking about our discards, I would ask you to think about
18 are there any species-specific concerns, and we realize that
19 gag, with the reduction in quota coming up, might have a higher
20 degree of discards, and we've also heard particularly about red
21 snapper discards within the longline fleet.

22
23 When you're thinking about it, we need to think about what is
24 driving the discards. In the review, we saw that the main
25 driver of discards was primarily size limits, and then secondary
26 drivers were lack of allocation, and sort of a tertiary, or
27 third, driver, and this was primarily in the blue-line tilefish,
28 was the ex-vessel value, and so, just as a reminder, when we
29 have share categories that have multiple species within it,
30 there may be discarding occurring, because one of those species
31 is more valuable than the other, but they share the same
32 allocation category.

33
34 Are there other tools that we could use to address discards?
35 Are there ways that we can think outside of the box and add new
36 functions, or features, to the program? Some of these that were
37 brainstormed was the idea that, instead of using a gag and red
38 grouper multiuse, would it be worthwhile to consider exploring
39 the idea of a red grouper and red snapper multiuse, as we're
40 hearing more and more about those two species being caught
41 together, and it might be time to revisit the idea of quota
42 banks, and I believe that's still in Amendment 36C, and so we
43 might want to look more in-depth at how quota banks could
44 address discards.

45
46 We could switch to ideas such as a full retention within the
47 fishery, whether that's one species, one category, or across
48 both programs, and another concept, used in some other

1 fisheries, is requiring a minimum allocation in order to go
2 fishing. HMS is one of the fisheries that uses that, and it's
3 sort of a choke allocation, so that, when you're going out, you
4 have enough allocation to account for the discards that you're
5 catching.

6
7 One of the other themes that really came up was the idea of
8 market transparency and the effectiveness, and this was
9 definitely brought up a little bit more pointedly within the
10 focus groups, and so I want to mention that finding shares, or
11 allocation, for a lot of the fishermen, is typically who you
12 know, and so something like word-of-mouth or some websites, and
13 there are not many out there that advertise it, or just who is
14 in your local region, who is geographically close to you.

15
16 I think an unintended consequence of this is, if you don't have
17 widespread connections, that you tend to think that you only can
18 exchange shares, or allocation, with the people geographically
19 close to you. One of the concerns within this too is
20 understanding the allocation price, and we hear often that the
21 red snapper allocation price is cost-prohibitive, and people
22 don't have current information to help them make the decision
23 about the value of that.

24
25 In the program, we only have limited tools right now to help
26 look into the price information and the market transparency.
27 The annual reports give you price information, and they show a
28 bunch of information about how transactions occur, but they are,
29 of course, annual, and so they're released only once per year,
30 and it's typically four or five months into the next year before
31 we release them.

32
33 In order to account for that, the catch share program has
34 started doing a newsletter "Catch Up on Catch Shares", and, in
35 those, every other issue will show the price information, and so
36 it at least gives you some more relevant price information
37 throughout the year. Some past studies looked at network
38 analysis, and it showed that, within the program, we have fairly
39 large differences in transfer behavior between allocation and
40 shares among the different shareholders.

41
42 Some people are very broad geographically, and they exchange
43 with a lot of different people, and others were very narrow in
44 scope, only exchanging allocation or shares with a small number
45 of accounts or within a small geographical space, and this might
46 be an opportunity for us to relook at the behavior since this
47 study was done and see what changes have occurred or how to
48 promote understanding of where the market could be for people

1 who are just geographically located and only using that as their
2 source.
3
4 What kind of tools are there out there that we could use to address
5 kind of the market effectiveness? Within in the IFQ program,
6 for every share or allocation transfer, we ask that the
7 fisherman gives us the transfer reason, why are you transferring
8 that, and, typically, our transfer reasons, right now, are for
9 sale, between related accounts, bartered, given as a gift, part
10 of a package deal, for the loan program, or no comment.
11
12 Unfortunately, no comment gets probably our largest percentage
13 of answers, and so there is the potential that we should remove
14 that, so we can gain more insight on what's going on within the
15 program.
16
17 Another idea would be to create some type of marketplace within
18 the IFQ system where people can advertise that they wish to buy
19 or sell shares or allocation. This would have to work within
20 the boundaries of the agency, but it gives a place that everyone
21 could know to come look for, and you would still have to do your
22 transfers, your buying and selling, between the individuals, but
23 at least you could see what would be advertised or know someone
24 who is wanting to buy or sell.
25
26 Another idea would be to look into creating an index for IFQ
27 price information for recent allocation or shares, and so we're
28 exploring that idea a little bit. We need to be careful about
29 the confidentiality of information and making sure we're not
30 sharing information that's considered confidential and thinking
31 about what's an effective amount of time to show, and,
32 obviously, it takes a long time for a year's worth of data to
33 show your prices, and can we roll it to three months, six
34 months, five months, and show a rolling index, and would that be
35 beneficial?
36
37 Another idea about the market transparency and effectiveness is
38 we would begin to think about a quota bank, and this would be a
39 way to offer allocation to participants coming into the program,
40 and you will start to see some of these themes, and the tools,
41 will overlap with other themes.
42
43 Back to the quota bank idea, and there is always the potential
44 to seed it with the quota that NOAA is holding right now from
45 Amendment 36A. I do want to caution you that the amount of
46 quota held is very low, and it's only resulting in a small
47 amount of pounds, and so, if we wanted to create a quota bank,
48 we would have to figure out additional ways to add shares to

1 that, so that we can operate it and use that allocation.

2
3 Share distribution was really a large theme in the discussions,
4 and this, in general, is a theme about a lot of catch share
5 programs. Within this, we saw that we covered ideas from all
6 the way through from inheritance to how shares were first
7 distributed to the shares that NMFS held to thinking about how
8 do we rethink distribution of shares, and is there a regional
9 concept that could be useful.

10
11 I think, as people have mentioned, the IFQ program, it does get
12 a little bit complicated, in particular when we think about
13 public participants and related accounts. These are
14 complications to thinking about access issues and share
15 distribution.

16
17 As a reminder, traditionally, catch share programs give out
18 shares once, and, thereafter, it's sort of a market condition
19 within it. One thing we noticed, in our programs, is there were
20 certain effects that occurred after we opened up each program
21 for public participation, and that occurred five years after
22 each program was run, and so, after public participation, how
23 deceased shareholders were dealt with -- It has opened up quite
24 a bit more room for them to hold onto those shares. Prior to
25 it, if the shareholder was deceased, while we dealt with the
26 legal aspects of it, those shares had to be removed out of that
27 account and only could be removed to an account that also held a
28 permit, and so, frequently, they were probably sold to other
29 people within the industry.

30
31 After public participation, the heir to those shares could
32 actually create their own account, and would not require a
33 permit, and just hold the shares within that. The other aspect
34 we saw, after public participation, was really an increase in
35 the number of what we call related accounts, and that's where
36 someone is involved in more than one account, and that might be
37 by businesses that they're involved with or held an account by
38 themselves, versus jointly with another person, and we saw that
39 related accounts increased by 30 percent after public
40 participation, and, when we dig into those public participant
41 accounts, and those are the accounts without permits, we see
42 that a high degree of them are related to other accounts, and,
43 of those related, a high degree of those actually have shares.

44
45 Again, I want to remind you that NMFS is still holding the
46 amount of shares from 36A, and it's less than 0.5 percent of
47 each share category, and, depending on what share category
48 you're talking about, it's from 291 pounds to roughly 5,500

1 pounds, by category, and so it's not enough to really start
2 something with, but it could be the seed to thinking about
3 different ways to use what we're holding.

4
5 What are the tools that we can think about to address the share
6 distribution? There is the adaptive catch share management
7 concept that Andrew recently just talked about, and there's also
8 an example of that in the catch shares newsletter, Issue 3, if
9 you want to look at it in another way, and it was originally
10 discussed within Amendments 41 and 42, and, particularly, at
11 that time, it was brought up because we didn't have catch
12 histories, and, as I mentioned earlier, this is being adopted by
13 the HMS IBQ program, and they're looking at how to do it. We
14 can get more information on their Amendment 13, if you would
15 like to hear more about it.

16
17 The other thing to think about is how do we rethink shares of
18 deceased shareholders, and this is also a concept that's being
19 talked about nationally within the catch share programs, as the
20 different regions are kind of getting to the point within their
21 programs where this might become more of an issue.

22
23 Thinking about a quota bank, again, is another example of how to
24 think about share distribution, and then there's ways we can
25 think about our share categories and go out of the box.
26 Currently, we have one share category that covers the entire
27 region and across gears, and we might want to explore ideas such
28 as regional shares, east coast and west coast, or gear-driven
29 shares, like longlines versus handheld gears, like vertical
30 lines or spearfishing.

31
32 Another concept came up as access, control, and concentration
33 themes were grouped together, and I want to remind you that
34 Magnuson requires that no one entity can acquire an excessive
35 share or privilege within the program. Typically, this is
36 controlled by the agency, through caps either on shares,
37 allocations, or landings, and access for fishermen needs to be
38 at a reasonable cost, and it seems to be the main driver here
39 with the access and control, and it does tend to center more on
40 one species than another, primarily being red snapper.

41
42 When we look at this, both programs contain the share caps, but
43 only the grouper-tilefish IFQ program has an allocation cap.
44 When we looked into the review at how successful these were, we
45 found that the caps do not really constrain landings, because
46 the caps are on shares or allocation, and that the caps were not
47 -- Market power is not really detected through the use of the
48 share caps.

1
2 Ways we can think about access and control, one thing we do need
3 to think about, and this might have been brought up earlier, is
4 the idea of vertical integration, and so, just to remind you
5 what vertical integration is, when you have one company that
6 might be involved in more than one state of production, we would
7 want to understand that and use that when looking at the
8 program, and so, for an example, there might be a fishing
9 business that is both a harvester as well as someone who is
10 involved in buying the seafood or processing the seafood, and so
11 they're vertically integrated across those different aspects
12 within the fishery.

13
14 Methods to kind of address access and control, and some of these
15 are in 36B, I believe, are requiring a permit to hold shares and
16 allocation, or maybe just require a permit to hold shares. A
17 requirement of landings to hold shares, this was talked about in
18 the focus group, and adaptive catch shares, again, comes up
19 within this.

20
21 Thinking about alternative methods to distribute quota
22 increases, which you've also heard within the focus group, and
23 then, for the control part, think about adding an allocation cap
24 for red snapper or perhaps, in both red snapper and grouper-
25 tilefish, replace an allocation cap in grouper-tilefish and add
26 to red snapper a vessel landing cap, and that would probably be
27 more able to constrain -- Thinking about some of the questions
28 asked earlier about the adaptive catch share, a vessel landing
29 cap with a share cap might help prevent some of the scenarios
30 that were being talked about within there, where someone would
31 exceed a share cap.

32
33 This slide is a little bit more information for the council, and
34 for the participants, within the program, and we heard an awful
35 lot, at the focus group, about the loan program, and so I wanted
36 to give you a little bit of history of the Fisheries Finance
37 Program and, in particular, how it relates to our programs.

38
39 In general, NOAA runs the Fisheries Finance Program, and this is
40 set under statute authority. All of the loan programs that
41 operate under it have a twenty-five-year maximum loan term, and
42 the borrower must be a U.S. citizen, or, if it's a business, I
43 believe it's 75 percent must be U.S. citizens, and the borrower
44 needs to meet normal credit requirements. Under this statute,
45 the Fisheries Finance Program can only loan 80 percent of the
46 cost of what is being purchased.

47
48 The reason these loan programs are important is that, while a

1 traditional lending institution can provide a loan to the
2 fishermen, oftentimes, they don't understand the fishing
3 industry, in particular catch share programs, well enough to
4 fully recognize where the risks, or the benefits, could be
5 within that.

6
7 In 2018, the loan authority was expanded to include catch share
8 programs, and this would be what we call the program's
9 harvesting privileges loans, and all loans still must be secured
10 under U.S.C. filings, and there needs to be control of the
11 shares by the FFP program.

12
13 We struggled with getting this program into the Gulf, because of
14 the way that our shares are constructed within the program, but,
15 in 2020, we were successful, working with Fisheries Finance, to
16 allow loan programs to start occurring within the Gulf. We
17 modified the catch share system to allow for the control of
18 shares and the tracking of the collateral, and so the harvest
19 privileges, or shares, are typically the primary collateral for
20 the loan, but the loan may also require additional security
21 pledges.

22
23 What we do is the shares are held by the loan program, so they
24 can have control over it, but they are counted against the
25 borrower's share cap, and so someone can't exceed the share cap
26 by the sake of getting a loan, and then any party who has any
27 significant ownership may also be required to guarantee the
28 loan.

29
30 Currently, we have two loans already approved in operation, and
31 we have other loans in discussion with the Fisheries Finance
32 Program. I would like to point out that we released, this week,
33 a Fishery Bulletin that explains the loan program in a lot more
34 depth, and I believe that Maria Starr, from the loan program, is
35 at the council meeting, if you wish to ask additional questions
36 to her.

37
38 The final theme is a bit of a catchall, and we were looking at
39 how to do innovative explorations of different topics that we've
40 heard over time and trying to figure out what avenues are open
41 to us either to gain more information, or more understanding,
42 about the IFQ program or explore different types of concepts.

43
44 Typically, on the table for exploration are exempted fishing
45 permits, or research set-asides, and I know the council is
46 exploring research set-asides in general, and so this would be a
47 good opportunity as well to think about how catch share programs
48 play into it.

1
2 One of the downsides is, typically, for either an EFP, or a
3 research set-aside, you need to have quota available to
4 implement those, and so, in order to do either of those, we
5 would need to be thinking about how we would supply the quota to
6 those programs, and, again, there needs to be probably more
7 information on the administration and oversight of any EFP or
8 RSA, and that likely might change, depending on what kind of
9 program is proposed to be looked at, and so I would ask the
10 council to think about how you might want to use research set-
11 asides, or EFPs, in order to explore the IFQ program.

12
13 Some ideas that popped up, during discussion about this theme,
14 is are there species-specific ideas for research set-aside, and,
15 in particular, we hear a lot about red snapper, or with the gag
16 quota decreasing, or looking at red grouper, and is there one
17 species specifically that we would like to learn more about?
18 Are there ideas that we want to explore a little bit more in
19 relation to the quota and concepts relating to that? Exploring
20 how fishing behavior might change, as changes in happen in
21 quota, and looking at how sector allocation overall affects
22 quota, or even looking at how quota is utilized within the
23 fishery.

24
25 There are ideas that probably could explore more information
26 about what's driving the prices in IFQ, and why does red snapper
27 seem to work differently than the grouper-tilefish, looking and
28 comparing both IFQ and non-IFQ factors, because keep in mind
29 this is still part of the reef fish fishery as a whole, and that
30 includes both IFQ and non-IFQ.

31
32 Then another concept that came out, really from the focus group,
33 is looking at what I would call the IFQ generations and how that
34 changes perceptions and how each different change in a goal or
35 objective might affect these different generations differently.
36 In generations, just thinking off the table, we were thinking
37 about there are the original stakeholders, from the start of the
38 program, sixteen or thirteen years ago, and then there is the
39 stakeholders who joined while we were still under the first five
40 years of the program and under stricter requirements for joining
41 and participating, and then those that joined after public
42 participation.

43
44 I've gone through a lot, and the questions we want to go back to
45 the council with is, looking at all these themes, are there
46 additional themes, or priorities, that we've overlooked that you
47 would like to add? Would you recommend including, or excluding,
48 any of the themes that we've already discussed, or are there any

1 administrative changes that would aid us in investigating these
2 or other themes, and then, finally, in looking through these, is
3 there something that should be prioritized for future council
4 action, or maybe just needs more information before you can make
5 that prioritization?
6

7 If you go one more slide, in order to answer these questions,
8 what I've done is taken all the slides before, and the different
9 themes, and I have summarized them here. I want to point out
10 that the loan program takes congressional action to change, and
11 so that's not something the council can do, which is why I've
12 grayed it out, and, when looking over some of these different
13 ideas, you will see that certain ideas, such as a quota bank,
14 cover multiple themes, and then ones that are in the teal are
15 really more administrative changes, or things that we can
16 explore through grants or solicit the stakeholders in the IFQ
17 program to get more information from. I will stop there for any
18 questions or discussion.
19

20 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thank you for the presentation. If you recall,
21 at the last meeting, I had asked for this list of priorities to
22 be generated, and I will readily admit that, once we started
23 digging into this, it wasn't a simple one-to-N priority-ranking
24 scheme. Obviously, this, I think, shows you the complexity of
25 the program, but, also, what staff has done is really, to me,
26 put together some logical themes, or areas, that we could
27 target, or focus, our attention on.
28

29 For those that have been around the table for a while, we all
30 recognize the struggles we've had, I think, with defining the
31 problem and making fixes to the program. 36B and C, I don't
32 know how long, Ava, we've been working on them, but I would
33 probably guess that you would say way too long, and so the
34 reality here is that, you know, my hope, my intent, is there's
35 some things that really resonated with you in this presentation,
36 and there's things that resonated with the IFQ Focus Group
37 comments, and that we could really turn our attention to one, or
38 a subset, of these themes and really put some energy and time
39 into improving the program and helping best meet the objectives
40 of the program, and so I look forward to the conversation.
41

42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Andy. Mr. Gill.
43

44 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I echo many of Andy's
45 comments, and, Jessica, I think it was an outstanding
46 presentation, and it was well laid out, and it provides a good
47 overview of the issues, and, obviously, one conclusion is, hey
48 this is complex, and I would argue that part of our problem is

1 we're trying to attack it all at once, and I will get more into
2 that in a minute, but, looking at some conclusions here, I see
3 some difficulties that we've had in dealing with -- We've
4 created our own problems, in a way, and, for example, program
5 goals and objectives, the agency requires that they be clear,
6 measurable, and achievable.

7
8 I would argue that these may be clear, but they're not
9 measurable, and they're certainly not smart in the acronym
10 sense, and they're not time-bound, for example, and so we've set
11 ourselves up for failure, in a way, but, despite that, the
12 program, based on the reviews, has been largely successful,
13 based on the original goals and objectives, and so that's good,
14 and so, unless we're willing to change that substantially, what
15 it says is we're not looking for major changes here, but we're
16 looking for tweaks.

17
18 The caveat there is that we're not looking to change goals and
19 objectives substantially, and, right now, there's only one
20 prospective goal, and that's overcapacity, and I would argue
21 that we haven't -- Including the fact that, when we set up the
22 grouper-tilefish, I don't recall that we ever discussed that in
23 any great detail, and we certainly didn't create it as a smart
24 goal, and I would argue that we didn't even address the
25 definition and that we're talking about it in generalities, but,
26 in reality, you're talking about one sense, and I'm talking
27 about another, and that's one of the primary goals of the
28 program, and we don't even really know what it meant.

29
30 I see there is significant issues in how we're addressing this.
31 You know, we've made numerous attempts to get at it, but, again,
32 I think the complexity -- You know, we're caught up in our own
33 underwear in trying to address everything at once, and,
34 surprisingly, we can't figure it out.

35
36 I think we need to go back to basics. I think we need to
37 consider what we want to do, and, to that end, I would argue
38 that every bullet below goals and objectives that we set aside
39 in a parking lot. Important? Yes, but we need to get our
40 fundamentals straight first, or we're just chasing our tail, and
41 so where we need to focus, in my mind, is goals and objectives.
42 What do we want to achieve, and I would argue that they need to
43 be smart goals and objectives, and they need to be measurable,
44 and they need to be time-bound and specific, and reducing
45 overcapacity is none of those, but, whatever other goals we want
46 to put in there, they need to be smart, and we need to define
47 what it is we're trying to do with a program that has been
48 successful thus far, as originally created.

1
2 If we want to change it, now is the time to do that, but we've
3 got to define how, and we haven't done that, and so my
4 suggestion, Mr. Chairman, on a path forward, is that we agree to
5 address goals and objectives only, define what we want for this
6 program going forward, and we take some time out of every Reef
7 Fish Committee meeting in the future, say an hour, or whatever
8 seems to be appropriate, and address just that, and I would
9 argue that, in doing that, we're not going to accomplish it in
10 one meeting or two, and it's going to take a while just to beat
11 that to death, but, if we can't identify where we're going, then
12 all of those other things, which are important, we can't
13 address.

14
15 We can sit and argue about what's good, and what's not good, but
16 we won't get to the end, just the way we haven't for the last
17 whatever it is, ten years, and so my suggestion is we focus, and
18 we go back to the fundamentals, and I would argue that we -- For
19 example, if reducing overcapacity remains as a goal, we define
20 what the heck that is and what we mean when we say it. I would
21 argue that we don't know right now.

22
23 I think the agency's version is one thing, and there was a
24 definition there, and I think have issues with that definition,
25 and I know it's a textbook version, but is that what we want? I
26 can tell you what we don't want, and that is to eliminate that
27 difference, based on that definition, and that's not what we
28 want, and so what are we talking about?

29
30 I don't think we know, and so I think we need to set aside some
31 time, every meeting, and take a small -- One of my things is
32 trying to define that elephant, and we need to take a very small
33 bite and attack that little small bite and see if we can get
34 over that, because, if we continue to attack the elephant, we'll
35 never get there, and we're spending an awful lot of time getting
36 nowhere, and so that's my recommendation for a path forward, Mr.
37 Chairman. Thank you.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Bob, for those
40 thoughtful comments, and let's see what the rest of the folks
41 have to say. Ms. Boggs.

42
43 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and I would agree with Bob,
44 but I disagree with -- I think a lot of the goals are measurable
45 that were set out initially, but I do agree with Bob, and,
46 Jessica, thank you for the presentation, and I do like the
47 summary. It's very well laid out, and I think it's laid out in
48 the order that it needs to be attacked, piece by piece, but, if

1 we don't know what our goals and objectives are, then how do we
2 know what our path forward is, and so I would agree with Bob.
3 Let's start there, and I think it is smart.

4
5 I think we're going to have to allocate some time, at each
6 meeting, to have these discussions, because it's not going to be
7 something, I don't think, that is resolved quickly, but I think
8 that, if we take it and spend the time, we'll get there. Thank
9 you.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Any other comments? Mr. Anson.

12
13 **MR. ANSON:** I will also support Mr. Gill's suggestion as a path
14 forward, that we, you know, put it on the agenda, and kind of
15 keep it on the agenda, and I think part of the issue that we
16 have, when we try to discuss IFQs, is that we'll have a meeting
17 with some discussion, and it will be on the agenda, and then
18 we'll go a meeting or two without it being on the agenda, and
19 it's kind of revisiting -- Or it takes a while to come back and
20 familiarize yourself with some of the issues.

21
22 I do appreciate the presentation. It's very thorough, I think,
23 and I appreciate Dr. Stephen and staff to put this together. I
24 do have a question about one of the slides, on Slide 12, where
25 it talks about methods to address access and concentration, and
26 it suggests replacing allocation caps with vessel landing caps,
27 and I'm just wondering, Dr. Stephen, and, in my mind, I don't
28 know, necessarily, if that would reduce the amount of capacity
29 in the fishery, if you had a vessel cap, and it just seems like
30 someone would want to acquire another vessel, if they still had
31 access to shares, or could get shares, and could you maybe
32 explain that a little bit?

33
34 **DR. STEPHEN:** Sure. I will take a stab at explaining it more.
35 Vessel caps are also often used in other catch share programs,
36 and one thing is it is actually clear and measurable for us to
37 calculate those, and they would be an annual vessel cap, and so
38 the total amount of landings a vessel could have.

39
40 What I want to back-up to is the current allocation cap is a
41 point-in-time allocation cap, and, when we looked at some
42 preliminary analysis, there are definitely some people who are
43 probably harvesting more than the share cap, because the share
44 cap does not constrain harvest if you're able to purchase more
45 allocation, and so, by doing a vessel cap on it, we would
46 probably be better able to look at, and control, how many people
47 are landing it.

48

1 Now, of course, that could mean that someone could go in and buy
2 another permit and put another vessel into the fishery, but it
3 could also mean that the vessels that might be harvesting a
4 little bit more, that we might be constraining their catch more,
5 the way the share caps intended, in order to do things, and I
6 would say, before going down that track, to allow the agency to
7 do a little bit more in-depth, and give you some more
8 information, if that's an avenue that you want to explore, but
9 we could pull up, over the years, the landings by vessels.

10
11 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

14
15 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I appreciate the discussion and the
16 suggestions, and, not surprisingly, obviously, a lot of people
17 are honing-in on we need to define our objectives, and maybe
18 improve, or redefine, them.

19
20 With regard to Mr. Gill's suggestion, I think the main concern I
21 have is that we tend to kind of let this kind of linger and
22 piecemeal it, and a little bit of time here, and a little bit of
23 time there, and it drags on for an extended period of time,
24 right, and we don't have the time and attention, I think,
25 dedicated to the issue to really focus-in, and, ultimately, I
26 think, if we want to make changes, and we want to make
27 improvements to the program, we need to spend the time doing so,
28 and so my preference, my recommendation, would be, before we
29 jump into the tactical approach of, well, what are we going to
30 modify, or change, and what themes do we want to address, let's
31 set aside time, either during a meeting coming up, or a special
32 meeting, virtual meeting, whatever the case might be, and have
33 that block of time just focused on the objectives, right, and
34 not do one hour here and one hour there and one hour three or
35 four meetings down the road, because, to me, I think we can --

36
37 It's going to be difficult, but we can hammer-out these
38 objectives, and improve them, and then that really sets the
39 stage clearly then as to kind of where the linkages are to these
40 themes and where we see the major changes to the objectives
41 happening and what we're going to ultimately need to address
42 with this program to improve it going forward, and so that's my
43 suggestion.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

46
47 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you for those comments, Andy, because I
48 believe, at the last meeting, I gave Carrie a full head of gray

1 hair, because I suggested a special meeting to address this, and
2 I want to commend Chairman Diaz for setting aside the amount of
3 time at this meeting to have these hard conversations that are
4 going to have to be had, but, I mean, I believe I mentioned it
5 at the last meeting, and we are going to have to dedicate some
6 time to this.

7
8 I know we have some other issues that are pressing, but these
9 are people's livelihoods, and it affects, you know, the
10 fisheries as a whole, as it trickles down to the other sectors,
11 and so thank you.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Diaz.

14
15 **MR. DIAZ:** Thank you, Tom. I am going to ramble for a minute,
16 and so you look around, one day, at this table, and you realize
17 you're one of the old-timers, and so that's kind of where I'm
18 at, and I am not saying this disparaging, Mr. Gill, but you've
19 got a lot of history here too, and so you're one of the old-
20 timers, and you understand how this thing came about and how
21 long we've been working on this.

22
23 To Andy's point, I mean, Roy Williams was on this council before
24 Tom, and Roy made a motion for us to pull the low-hanging fruit
25 out and develop 36A, and we did, and there was a couple of
26 actions that we could do that moved through quickly, and 36B and
27 C have lingered since at least Tom's time on the council, and so
28 I'm going to guess around eight years, maybe, or something like
29 that, but part of the problem is what you just said, Andy, is we
30 get it, and we look at it at a meeting, and we've got an hour or
31 two, and part of the issue is one of the things that Mr. Gill
32 said, is that the program has met a lot of its objectives and
33 goals, and so we get bogged down.

34
35 I think you all are right that we need to set our goals and
36 objectives out, and I don't think that an hour every meeting
37 will get us there, and I think we'll just be, three years down
38 the road, at the same place we've been for the last eight years,
39 if we do that, and so we need to dedicate substantial time, and
40 I'm not sure what that means.

41
42 It might be more time at a couple of meetings, and it might be a
43 special meeting, and I don't know, but it needs to be
44 substantial time to make some progress, but we do have to hammer
45 those out first.

46
47 I would be remiss if I didn't say that something bothered me two
48 meetings ago, and we had people -- I have had people tell me

1 this many times, that they fear retaliation, and we've got a
2 government program that people are worried that they can't use
3 their rights as an American to say their piece about what they
4 think to improve a government program and they fear retaliation.

5
6 I don't know how you put that in the goals and objectives, but
7 that bothered me more than anything, and it bothers me more than
8 anything, and I don't want a program where people can't try to
9 give ideas that they think would help them. Everybody that
10 comes to talk about this is talking about from their point of
11 view, and so some people are sitting in a situation where they
12 have a lot of shares, and, from their point of view, they look
13 at it that way, and some people are medium shareholders, and
14 some are low, and some have none, and everybody tries to think
15 about how to improve it from their point of view, and we need to
16 be able to get comments from people from all sectors without
17 them worrying about retaliation, and so we do need to get a
18 handle on that.

19
20 Anyway, that's all I'm going to say at this point, but I did
21 want to ask Dr. Stephen -- She had mentioned red snapper and red
22 grouper multiuse, and I was trying to think through that when
23 she said it, and I really didn't get a full understanding of it,
24 and I was going to see if she could talk a little bit about what
25 they were thinking when they said red grouper and red snapper
26 multiuse and how they thought that might work. Thank you.

27
28 **DR. STEPHEN:** Sure, I can respond to that, and this is actually
29 a comment that I had heard from some of the industry in
30 exploring different concepts, and so, currently, what we have is
31 a red grouper-gag multiuse, where a percentage is taken from
32 each of those share categories and put into what we call
33 multiuse, and then it can be used to land, harvest, either gag
34 or red grouper.

35
36 One of the ideas that came up is that there seems to be a lot of
37 cooccurrence of red snapper with red grouper, particularly I
38 think more in the longline fleet, and so the idea would be,
39 instead of having a red grouper-gag multiuse, to switch it to a
40 red snapper-red grouper multiuse.

41
42 As we've mentioned, nothing is overly simplistic in IFQ, and we
43 would have to relook at how we have the quotas set for each one
44 of those, to accommodate that, and we would probably want to
45 create a formula, similar to what we have, so that using that
46 multiuse to harvest either species doesn't exceed the ACL for
47 either species, but that's a concept that we can explore more.
48 It was one that I had heard from the industry, and I thought it

1 was a little out-of-the-box, and I wanted to present it to the
2 council, just to think about things in different ways.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Stephen. Mr. Anson and then
5 Mr. Gill.

6

7 **MR. ANSON:** Sorry that I didn't ask this earlier, but, Dr.
8 Stephen, another question that I have from your presentation, on
9 Slide 13, is the loan programs, and there's the bullet in there,
10 on the right-hand side, there at the bottom, and it says all
11 parties with significant ownership may be required to guarantee
12 loan repayment, and so does that mean they have to have
13 collateral, or secure another loan, to cover the cost, or can
14 you describe that?

15

16 **DR. STEPHEN:** You're getting a little bit outside my expertise,
17 but I will take a stab at it, and, if Maria is there, she might
18 be able to explain more. When you have more than one party
19 jointly coming together to do the loan, if the shares aren't
20 enough collateral, and they need additional collateral, then
21 they might make sure that everyone is guaranteed to make that
22 loan repayment, and sorry that I can't give you too much more,
23 because it is an area that I don't completely understand. I
24 don't know, Andy, if Maria is there, and maybe she could speak
25 to it.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Maria, if you want to come up to the podium,
28 that would be great.

29

30 **MS. MARIA STARR:** Thank you. To expand, thank you, Jessica, for
31 giving that a go, and so I will do my best to answer your
32 question. What this means is let's say this individual has more
33 than one company, and one company, the applicant for the loan
34 program -- We may request that the other company, as entities,
35 also guarantee the loan, and does that make sense?

36

37 **MR. ANSON:** It does. Thank you.

38

39 **MS. STARR:** Okay. Any other questions? If anybody has any
40 other questions for the loan program, I will be here all day,
41 and we have a presentation afterwards as well, and so please
42 feel free to just ask any other questions. Thank you.

43

44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Starr. All right. I think Bob
45 Gill had his hand up next.

46

47 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, Andy, in response to
48 your suggestion, that's one way to skin the cat. My concern is

1 that we will have difficulty, as we almost always do, in
2 maintaining focus and keeping to the agenda, and so, to have a
3 chance of accomplishing, in one fell swoop, the goals of that
4 meeting, it would have to be a very focused agenda, in my
5 opinion, and a very chair, whoever that is, driving that
6 meeting, because we have that tendency to get into all these
7 other issues and get off-track.

8

9 My thought of the one-hour, and I agree that's cut down to size,
10 but small bites, and we have a chance of not getting as off-
11 track, and I would also argue that timing is not a question in
12 this issue, because we've been dealing with this for ten years,
13 and clearly it's not achievable in a short time, but the
14 question is if, will we achieve it, and so I think we can do
15 that, but it's going to take some discipline around the table,
16 and it's going to take some discipline from the chair, and it
17 will take some discipline on a tightly-structured agenda, in
18 order to get to a point in one meeting. Thank you.

19

20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** To that point, Mr. Strelcheck?

21

22 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, and so all valid points, Bob, and I agree
23 that any discussion of this, whether it's an hour or four hours
24 or a whole day, would need to be very focused, and ideas are
25 running through my mind, in terms of having facilitated
26 discussion, you know, thinking about how staff could set us up
27 for success, with regard to outlining the objectives and the
28 problem statements that, you know, we're hearing about, the kind
29 of pros and cons, benefits and drawbacks, and, I mean, I think
30 there's lots of different ways that we could skin a cat, or take
31 a bite of the elephant, so to speak.

32

33 With that said, I mean, the concern I have is, I guess, twofold,
34 right, and so I will put myself in the old-timer category at
35 this table as well, and I might look a little younger than many
36 of you, but I have some grayer hairs, and I was one of the early
37 people to develop the program as well.

38

39 Sitting in my new chair, as the Regional Administrator, this is
40 the most concern, or problems, or issues, that I've been hearing
41 about the program in pretty much its entire history, and we're
42 not alone. It's not unique to the Gulf of Mexico, and we're
43 hearing some similar growing pains with regard to other IFQ
44 programs throughout the country, and we have the NAS study, and
45 so, to me, I think it's important that we move on this and take
46 these issues seriously and really hone-in on how we could set
47 the direction for this program.

48

1 I do recommend that we're thoughtful, in terms of the approach,
2 so that we don't go sideways, and we don't get off-track, in
3 terms of the conversation, and maybe we can think through,
4 between now and Full Council, some ideas, in terms of how to
5 best approach this to make it successful.

6
7 One of my thoughts is that the council meeting itself is
8 probably not the best forum to have a lengthy discussion, right,
9 and so your point, I think, is well taken, in terms of smaller
10 bites that could happen at a council meeting, but, if we're
11 going to do big chunks, I think it really would want to be
12 tailored to an IFQ-focused meeting.

13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Strelcheck. Ms. Boggs.

15
16 **MS. BOGGS:** Another issue that this council faces too, and when
17 we're trying to make these decisions, and the fact that it's
18 been eight or nine years looking at these, is, in two months,
19 we'll have, potentially, three new members to the council, and
20 that's a downfall, in a sense, when you have a big subject like
21 this that you've been talking about, and you have new members
22 come in, and it's a challenge, I think.

23
24 I'm not saying it's impossible, but I think it's a challenge,
25 and I understand why we have the term limits and things like
26 that, but I do feel like it's a challenge, because, if you're
27 not familiar with the program, then you have to get up-to-speed,
28 and, I mean, I'm not suggesting that this be done in the next
29 two -- Or by June, because that's not going to happen, but
30 another suggestion that I have is, if we do take and have an
31 extra meeting, if you will, to tackle this, is maybe we have a
32 facilitator, so that we don't have to -- Tom, or whoever is the
33 Reef Fish chair, or whoever or new chair is at that point, they
34 can be more inclusive in the conversation, instead of trying to
35 run that meeting. That's just food for thought.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Dyskow.

38
39 **MR. PHIL DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Frazer. Going back to page 2,
40 we discussed the current program goals and objectives, and we
41 only have two, and one is to reduce overcapacity, and other is
42 to mitigate derby-fishing conditions, and I think we hear very
43 little discussion about our Objective Number 2. Mitigating
44 derby fishing conditions has basically happened, and we have
45 reduced overcapacity, by implementing a catch share program, but
46 the real issue is within that area, and how have we -- The way
47 we've chosen to reduce overcapacity has caused challenges to
48 some people.

1
2 A small number of people have a large amount of the available
3 shares, and, obviously, there are some people that think that's
4 a good idea, and there is some people that don't, and so, if
5 we're going to modify the goals and objectives, I don't know
6 that those two objectives are bad, but I think the methodology
7 that we pursue to accomplish those objectives, particularly
8 Objective Number 1 of reducing overcapacity, is what is causing
9 the challenge.

10
11 Every time we try to tweak that program, to address some of
12 these areas of concern, we've gotten nowhere, but, ultimately,
13 that's probably what needs to happen. You know, if we don't
14 want to start over, and reinvent something new, then we need to
15 tweak that program to eliminate some of the concerns, or most of
16 the concerns, that we hear about all the time, and, you know,
17 I'm sure that, Andy, at your office, you hear it every day.
18 There's somebody on the outside looking in that's not happy, and
19 perhaps that's what we ought to address, at some level.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Dyskow. Dr. Lasseter.

22
23 **DR. LASSETER:** Thank you. I wanted to speak to the two goals
24 and objectives, and so, over the last few years, and Peter and I
25 have been really working on trying to address the discussion on
26 the goals with you guys, and you did pass a motion, and I would
27 have to look at which meeting it was, pertaining to the
28 improving safety-at-sea, reducing the derby fishing conditions,
29 and this council did approve that that goal has been met and no
30 longer needs to be an outstanding goal in the program, and so we
31 do still have it listed there, because that was one of the
32 original goals, but this council has made a determination that
33 that goal had been met, and I believe it's in 36B, in the text,
34 that would then be formalized, if we had finished that
35 amendment, but I did want to call everybody's attention to that.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Dr. Lasseter, and so I
38 think I'm trying to capture all of the comments, and I think
39 there's a lot of commonalities here, and I think, moving
40 forward, that getting back to basics, some fundamentals and
41 focus, is probably the way to go.

42
43 I would suggest that we take bite-sized chunks at this, and the
44 issue of overcapacity is probably a good place to start, because
45 we don't have a definition of what that is. I think there are
46 textbook definitions, you know, but, really, in my view,
47 overcapacity -- In order to determine that, it requires you,
48 again, to understand what you're trying to optimize, and we had

1 that discussion a little bit yesterday.

2

3 I think it might be quite valuable to take a stab at this, step
4 back and just deal with one particular issue, and we can deal
5 with the overcapacity issue, and we can think about, again, how
6 to define that, and we can provide examples, and we'll have to
7 think about how we want to structure that meeting, but we can
8 allocate enough time, and I think that will get us moving in the
9 right direction, because, if we can't address the overcapacity
10 issue, in my mind, right, we will never be able to deal with
11 some of these other issues related to, you know, new entrants,
12 for example, and that's another term.

13

14 You know, I think we would have to get there, and I'm not sure
15 what we're trying to do here with optimizing participation in
16 the fishery, and do we want a bunch of new entrants, for
17 example, or do we want a more balanced demographic in the
18 fishery, but, in order to get there, you have to deal with your
19 objectives, and so I would suggest, you know, to the chair,
20 perhaps, that, moving forward -- I think people tend to agree
21 that we're going to have to allocate some specific time to a
22 topic, and I think this is an appropriate one, based on the
23 conversation that I've heard, and I will let the chair,
24 obviously, determine how much time we might want to allocate at
25 a subsequent meeting. Dr. Simmons.

26

27 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
28 think staff needs super clear direction on this, and we need a
29 motion before we leave here, please, and so folks be thinking
30 about that.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Again, it might be a little premature to, you
33 know, just construct a motion at this point, but we can
34 certainly do it in Full Council, when we're going through the
35 committee report, and so, like Dr. Simmons, I would suggest that
36 people think about that, and, maybe, if you have some ideas,
37 come find me, in case in there are multiple ideas floating
38 around, and we can streamline that process and make it a little
39 more efficient. All right.

40

41 One of the objectives, right, that we had, as Lassetter pointed
42 out in the action guide, is to identify some priorities, and I
43 think we probably have done that, and trying to figure out -- I
44 think this motion will help us determine how much time, and what
45 approach we want to use, moving forward, with regard to setting
46 aside some time, and so, unless there are any other comments,
47 you know, related to this particular topic, I think, Mr. Chair,
48 we'll move on to the next one. If you want to take a five-

1 minute break, that's fine too, or ten minutes. It's up to you.

2
3 **MR. DIAZ:** I do. I think this is a good time to take a break.
4 Let's take a break, and we'll come back at 10:50.

5
6 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)
7

8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We'll go ahead and get started with a
9 discussion on Draft Amendment 56, and I will go ahead and turn
10 it over to Mr. Rindone to walk us through the action guide.

11
12 **DRAFT AMENDMENT 56: MODIFICATIONS TO THE GAG GROUPEL CATCH**
13 **LIMITS, SECTOR ALLOCATIONS, AND FISHING SEASONS**
14

15 **MR. RINDONE:** All right. We're going to start with an update
16 from SERO about the requested interim rule for gag grouper,
17 which is intended to reduce fishing mortality ahead of the
18 development and implementation of this amendment, which will be
19 the rebuilding plan for gag. In July, the SSC reviewed the
20 alternative run for SEDAR 72 that supplanted the MRIP-FES
21 calibrated recreational catch and effort for the private vessels
22 with the same data from the State of Florida's State Reef Fish
23 Survey.

24
25 The SRFS run also found gag to be overfished and undergoing
26 overfishing and was determined, by the SSC, to be consistent
27 with BSIA, using a proxy for MSY of 40 percent of the spawning
28 potential ratio, and I will talk a little bit more about that
29 justification for that. The SSC thought that this higher MSY
30 proxy would allow the stock to rebuild to a more robust size and
31 that it would help it better weather things like episodic
32 mortality from red tide events.

33
34 In October of 2022, you guys requested for us to explore several
35 other measures for the development of Amendment 56, and I will
36 talk about some of those in the presentation that I'm going to
37 give you, and we'll also present the options for modifications
38 to the catch limits and sector allocations, based on the
39 rebuilding periods that are offered, and for modifying the
40 recreational fishing season using the SRFS catch and effort data
41 for private vessels in the MRIP-FES data for the recreational
42 landings, and so you guys should ask lots of questions, and make
43 recommendations, if appropriate, and, right now, our intention
44 is to clean this up a little bit and bring it back to you guys
45 as a public hearing draft in April.

46
47 This one was a little bit late coming into you for the briefing
48 book, because we were waiting on the season duration

1 projections, but we were able to include those, and so that
2 fills out the preliminary information for you guys for
3 considering the recreational fishing season duration options in
4 Action 2.

5
6 Then we should probably discuss, after we get through all of
7 this, some candidate public hearing locations, which I think Dr.
8 Sweetman is ready to offer some suggestions about, when we get
9 to that.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We'll go to Tab B, Number 6(a).

12
13 **MR. RINDONE:** Okay. As we mentioned, SEDAR 72 found gag to be
14 overfished and undergoing overfishing, and the spawning stock
15 biomass is very, very much largely female right now, and only
16 about 2 percent of it is comprised of males, which could be
17 resulting in some sperm limitation and limitation on the stock's
18 reproductive capacity, and the recreational and commercial
19 sectors have not been landing their ACLs in recent years. I
20 think this is as good of a point as any for SERO to chime-in
21 about the interim rule, and, Andy, I don't know if you want to
22 do that or pawn that to Peter.

23
24 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I will take a stab, and Peter can fill in, and
25 so we have provisions, with the IFQ program, to withhold quota
26 when there's pending rulemaking, and so, at the start of the
27 fishing year, January 1, we did reduce the commercial gag quota
28 commensurate with the interim rule.

29
30 The interim rule, at this point, is in the proposed rule stage,
31 and we have yet to publish the proposed rule, but it's pending
32 within the next week or so, and the goal is to have that rule
33 implemented before May 1, or May 31, I think is the -- May 1.
34 That will be in effect, and it will implement the commercial
35 quota change and the recreational ACL change as well as the
36 recreational fishing season for 2023.

37
38 **MR. RINDONE:** Is it also going to be implemented alongside that
39 red snapper ACL increase? Is that still part of that, or is it
40 going to be done separately?

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Peter.

43
44 **MR. HOOD:** I guess I'm not -- The red snapper ACL increase is
45 moving along, and then the interim rule -- That cleared up at
46 our headquarters, and so I think it will be publishing, if not
47 this week, next week, and it will have a fifteen-day comment
48 period, and then our goal is then get the final rule published,

1 and the May 1 date -- We basically have to have the final rule
2 published by May 1, or May 2, in order for the rule to be
3 effective by June 1, which is when the gag season starts.

4
5 **MR. RINDONE:** Got it. Any questions on that, before I go on?
6 No hands. All right. So we started working on this amendment,
7 which creates the rebuilding plan for gag, and Dr. Lasseter was
8 kind enough to put together a couple of background slides for
9 you guys, showing the magnitude of the landings against the
10 management measures for both the commercial and recreational
11 fleets from 1993 to 2019, and so, here, we have the commercial
12 landings.

13
14 I will give you guys just a second to digest all this, but the
15 short story of this being that commercial landings have been
16 down, compared to the commercial ACL, for the last several
17 years. There was a little bit of a spike there in 2016, and
18 this, obviously, doesn't include 2020 and 2021 and 2022, and
19 landings in 2021 and 2022 were a little bit higher than what you
20 see here, but I'm trying to present commensurate data for both,
21 based on the information that was used in the assessment.

22
23 The recreational landings are shown here, and there's a drop-off
24 in the recreational landings in the early to mid-2000s, and,
25 looking at number of days there on the Y-axis, you can see the
26 number of fishing days went up, and the recreational landings
27 did not go up with it, and they remained relatively flat, and,
28 during this same time period, the recruitment for gag -- The
29 landings for the commercial sector showed a similar pattern,
30 but, also, during this same time period, the recruitment for gag
31 was also pretty flat and below the long-term average. We had
32 notable red tide events, just for everyone's edification, in
33 2005, 2014, 2018, and 2021.

34
35 Just as a bit of a primer, before we dive into Action 1, which
36 is a pretty dynamic action, and there's a lot of different
37 things that are at play, but the data that are used in
38 Alternatives 2 and 3 use Florida's State Reef Fish Survey for
39 the private vessel catch and effort. For the shore mode and the
40 for-hire modes, those are still using FES, and the headboat uses
41 the Southeast Region Headboat Survey, and so SRFS shows historic
42 effort estimates that are a little bit greater than those shown
43 in MRIP's old Coastal Household Survey, and much lower than that
44 shown in the Fishing Effort Survey, and we can't really compare
45 Alternative 1 to Alternatives 2 and 3, due to the use of the
46 combination of the different data currencies in the alternative
47 run from SEDAR 72, and so that's why those aren't shown here in
48 the presentation.

1
2 As far as the reference points are concerned, Fmax was used in
3 the previous assessments, and it's kind of akin to fishing at a
4 wide-open throttle, and this wasn't recommended as sustainable
5 for the stock by the SSC. When the SSC reviewed the first run
6 of SEDAR 72 that used MRIP-FES for all of the recreational
7 landings, they recommended a proxy of 30 percent, a 30 percent
8 spawning potential ratio, trying to be
9 considerate of gag's vulnerability to red tide episodic
10 mortality and the stock's reproductive ability.

11
12 Now, FES had shown substantially higher recreational landings
13 over the historical time series, which suggested that the stock
14 must have had to have been large enough to support those
15 landings, even to be where it is today, which is part of the
16 reason why the SSC had landed on that 30 percent SPR proxy.

17
18 When the SSC reviewed the alternative SEDAR 72 run using SRFS
19 for the private vessels, the SSC increased that MSY proxy
20 recommendation to 40 percent SPR, due to some more recent
21 information about the magnitude of the red tide mortality, and
22 this model was able to incorporate age-specific estimates of
23 episodic mortality from red tide by year, which is a pretty
24 great ecosystem-style modeling improvement to the stock
25 assessment process, but SRFS, again, doesn't have the magnitude
26 of effort. It doesn't demonstrate the magnitude of effort that
27 was coming out of FES, and so the overall landings that are
28 estimated are greater than those in CHTS, but less than those
29 from FES, and still there is some scaling to what the historical
30 stock size would have had to have been in order to sustain those
31 landings.

32
33 The SSC thought that the 40 percent SPR proxy would be
34 appropriate to build the stock to a more resilient biomass level
35 to sustain the stock against both fishing mortality and future
36 red tide events, and it's pretty accepted, at this point, that
37 it's not if there will be another red tide, but it's when and
38 how bad it will be, how long it will last, and the spatial
39 coverage that it will have.

40
41 The 2021 red tide severity, for the sake of the projections, was
42 estimated to be, qualitatively, medium, compared to what was
43 estimated to be observed in 2005.

44
45 Action 1, we'll start with no action, which is to retain the
46 current catch limits and sector allocations for gag. That's
47 shown in the table down there, and the current catch limits were
48 set and monitored using MRIP-CHTS currency and using an MSY

1 proxy of Fmax.
2
3 The sector allocation is 61 percent recreational and 39 percent
4 commercial, done in 30B, and it's important to note that, as
5 SERO has noted, that, by May 2, the interim rule is expected to
6 be implemented, which is going to -- Sorry. It's expected to be
7 approved, which is going to change what our Alternative 1 is for
8 this document, and so what you see here, and what you will see
9 in April, will ultimately be modified in June, to reflect what
10 the actual regulations are, but we're going to provide both of
11 them to you guys, just so you know what we have now and you know
12 what's coming, for where our status quo is.
13
14 A note here, and, obviously, since the SSC doesn't support Fmax
15 as being sustainable, and not consistent with BSIA, and because
16 of the data currencies, Alternative 1 is not a viable
17 alternative.
18
19 This is the information from the interim rule, which shows the
20 revised catch limits based on the stock ACL, as advertised in
21 the interim rule, under the 30 percent SPR proxy from using
22 MRIP-FES, and maintain the same sector allocation, as you guys
23 have specified that you didn't want to change sector allocations
24 as a function of doing the interim rule. Again, this will be
25 the new Alternative 1, for Action 1, once the rule is
26 implemented.
27
28 Alternative 2 would revise the gag catch limits using 40 percent
29 SPR as the MSY proxy, with the ABC set equal to the total of the
30 ACLs, and the sector allocation would remain the same. Catch
31 limits would be set using, and monitored in, SRFS units for the
32 private angling landings, and FES for the other recreational
33 landings, and so that's for the shore mode and for the for-hire
34 sector.
35
36 This would establish a rebuilding timeline for gag, and the
37 catch limits would be rounded -- They will be rounded down to
38 the nearest thousand pounds, and we've had a conversation with
39 NOAA GC about how we do our rounding, and so the numbers that
40 you guys see will be very, very slightly different in the next
41 iteration, and different in like the thousand-pound range, and
42 so not anything major.
43
44 There are four options for rebuilding. There is the minimum
45 time that it would take to rebuild assuming no fishing mortality
46 at all, and that's eleven years, the time to rebuild at the
47 yield at 75 percent of the fishing mortality at the MSY proxy of
48 40 percent SPR, and that's eighteen years, and then the minimum

1 time to rebuild plus one generation time, or the amount of time
2 that it takes for a spawner to sexually mature and reproduce and
3 for that individual to become sexually mature, and so that's
4 about eight years, and so that total time becomes nineteen
5 years. Then two-times the minimum time to rebuild, or twenty-
6 two years, and these are all from the Magnuson Act.

7
8 It's important to note that all of the options, 2a through 2d,
9 rebuild to the same target biomass level that results from using
10 that 40 percent MSY proxy, and so they all get to the same
11 place, but they just get there at different speeds, and,
12 essentially, the longer you take to rebuild the stock, the more
13 yield you get in the early years, but, again, the longer you're
14 in that rebuilding plan and the accountability measures that
15 come with that.

16
17 The next few slides will show you the yields based on the
18 options. Option 2a, and, in the next Alternative 3a, are going
19 to be zeroed-out for the ABCs and everything that follows,
20 because they would assume no fishing mortality, and then 2b is
21 shown there, and so, as you go from Option 2b to 2c, the catch
22 limits increase a little bit by year.

23
24 Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 3, except that it
25 revises the sector allocation based on applying the SRFS-
26 calibrated landings to the historical time period that was used
27 to set the allocation to begin with, which was 1986 to 2005, and
28 this results in a sector allocation that is 65 percent
29 recreational and 35 percent commercial, and, again, the same
30 options from the Act for establishing the time to rebuild.

31
32 Just like in Alternative 2, as you go from Option 3b to 3d, the
33 catch limits increase a little bit, but the rebuilding time
34 period is also longer, and so how long you would have to be
35 aware of things like the accountability measures that come into
36 effect when you have a stock that's in a building plan would
37 continue, things like the paybacks, for example. Mara's hand is
38 up.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Levy.

41
42 **MS. MARA LEVY:** Thanks, and so I just -- Thanks, Ryan, for that,
43 and I just want to make a couple of things clear, and so these
44 alternative rebuilding times, other than the T_{min}, don't come
45 from the Magnuson Act, and so they're in the National Standard 1
46 Guidelines, and so I just want to make that clear, because it's
47 very different. The legal requirement is to rebuild in the
48 shortest time possible, taking into account the biology of the

1 stock, the fishing community, and some international things, if
2 they apply, and the guidelines that NMFS then puts forward talk
3 about you determine that T target, or the shortest time
4 possible.

5
6 You have to have a Tmin, which we have, and then these are three
7 alternative ways of picking a Tmax, right, and these are the
8 maximum allowable times under the guidelines. Your task is then
9 to pick the shortest time possible, taking into account the
10 biology of the stock and the needs of the fishing community, and
11 so I just want to make that clear, that there are potential --
12 If you decided to do something in between Tmin and these
13 options, that's perfectly reasonable, and maybe something we
14 should at least talk about, and I'm not saying that you
15 necessarily need to add a particular action, but I guess I just
16 wanted to make clear the legal statutory requirements versus the
17 guidelines, which are not statutory requirements.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, Ms. Levy. Carry on,
20 Ryan.

21
22 **MR. RINDONE:** Thanks, Mara, and the other consideration here is
23 that we're saying that the recreational and the commercial ACLs
24 are equal to the ABCs, but we're not doing anything, at the
25 moment, for changing the ACTs, and so the commercial ACT is set
26 at 14 percent below the ACL, and then the recreational ACT is
27 set using the ACL/ACT Control Rule at the time, and I think it's
28 10 percent below, or it's 10.25 percent, or something like that.
29 Peter, I'm kind of looking at you.

30
31 I think that's what was in the interim rule, and it was just --
32 It was continued forward in the interim rule, and so we
33 continued it forward here, for consistency, and so, if there was
34 any desire to revisit any of that, you guys would need to tell
35 us, but, at this point, we were just putting forward what was
36 used in the interim rule for expediting this along, given the
37 window of time to move forward with this. Seeing no hand-
38 waving, any thoughts about the options that are presented here?

39
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Gill and then Dr. Sweetman.

41
42 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so, in both Alternative
43 2 and Alternative 3, Options c and d are right alongside each
44 other, and they're virtually a minimal difference, and there may
45 be as much as 50,000 pounds or something, and is there some
46 reason that suggests it's reasonable to leave both in the
47 document? I don't see it, and I am prepared to make a motion to
48 move 2 and 3c to Considered but Rejected, but I wanted to see if

1 there's some other reason that I'm not thinking about.

2

3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

4

5 **MR. RINDONE:** So, I guess, thinking about this functionally,
6 when we're thinking about generation time, it's predicated on
7 there being successful spawning and things like that, and what
8 we would expect the stock to be doing under healthy
9 circumstances, and, if there's a limitation, in terms of the
10 number of males that are out there, and there's a lot of skipped
11 spawning that's happening, because these newly-sexually-mature
12 females are not interacting with males and having an opportunity
13 to spawn, then the amount of time it takes for a fish to grow to
14 become sexually mature and reproduce and then for that fish to
15 become sexually mature may be variable, based on what we
16 perceive to be the probability of successful reproduction, given
17 the current stock condition.

18

19 The calculation of generation time is correct insofar as it
20 relates to what we know about the life history of the fish, but,
21 given the current condition of the stock, it might be a little
22 less certain, and so I think Option 3c might be one that you
23 guys might consider -- Or Option c for both, perhaps, for both
24 alternatives, might be one that you guys would consider.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Gill, did you want to make that motion
27 now, or is C.J. going to speak to this point before you do that?
28 Okay. Go ahead, Bob.

29

30 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make that motion.
31 Thank you for that info, Ryan. **I move that Options 2c and 3c be**
32 **moved to Considered but Rejected.**

33

34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. We've got a motion, and we'll put it up
35 on the board. It was seconded by Dr. Sweetman. As soon as we
36 get it up there, I will open the floor for discussion.

37

38 **MR. RINDONE:** We could say in Alternatives 2 and 3, to move
39 Option c to Considered but Rejected, or to move Option 2c and 3c
40 in Alternatives 2 and 3, and however you want to say it, but
41 it's Options 2c and 3c in Alternatives 2 and 3. I mean, that's
42 fine. I get what's going on, and so --

43

44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so the motion is on the board, and
45 it's made by Mr. Gill and seconded by Dr. Sweetman. Bob, did
46 you want to elaborate on this at all?

47

48 **MR. GILL:** Several things, sir. One is that, as Ryan mentioned,

1 in the c variety, we're talking about greater uncertainty. The
2 difference between b and c is, in terms of rebuild time, is a
3 year, and the difference, in terms of allowed landings, is
4 minimal, and I think it would simplify the document, as well as
5 make the distinction, in terms of what the ultimate decision is,
6 a little clearer.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Bob. Is there any further
9 discussion on the motion? I am not seeing. **Is there any**
10 **opposition to this motion? Not seeing any, the motion carries.**
11 Thank you, Bob.

12
13 **MR. RINDONE:** All right.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

16
17 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Before we go on, I wanted to kind of circle
18 back on Mara's comments, and I do appreciate the streamlining,
19 in terms of removing an alternative, given the closeness, and we
20 have a situation where we're using essentially two proxies for
21 Tmax, right, eighteen years and twenty-two years. Status quo,
22 or the Tmin, is really undesirable, and we don't want to close
23 the fishery. From a socioeconomic standpoint, obviously, that's
24 substantial dire consequences.

25
26 We ultimately want to maintain some sort of data stream, but
27 Ocean Conservancy has pointed to the fact that we do not have a
28 T target, right, and I don't know what that T target is, other
29 than it's probably somewhere between Tmin and the eighteen-year
30 Tmax that we've selected.

31
32 I would like at least some discussion as to whether or not it's
33 reasonable, obviously, to consider another option for rebuilding
34 that is currently not in the document right now, because I think
35 we need to build a record on that.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Gill.

38
39 **MR. GILL:** So what are you thinking? It seems, to me, that
40 we've pretty well spanned the reasonable gap, and so what other
41 options are you suggesting that we ought to be considering?

42
43 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I'm not necessarily suggesting new options,
44 right, but I think it's just important that we have, right now,
45 eleven, eighteen, and twenty-two years, and, to me, it would be
46 kind of arbitrary to just choose something else, right, unless
47 there is reason to believe, obviously, that, you know, T target
48 is going to be better for rebuilding the fishery, and,

1 obviously, the shorter the timeframe for rebuilding, the higher
2 the likelihood for success in reaching that target, right, and
3 the greater conservation value, right, but you also then trade
4 that off with greater socioeconomic consequences, right, and so
5 we're ultimately trying to decide now, without necessarily that
6 information before us right now, and I just wanted to make sure
7 we had a sufficient conversation around the T target, and it was
8 a comment that was made.

9

10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

11

12 **MR. RINDONE:** An important note here is that we are
13 exceptionally tight on time here, and, if we have any new T
14 target that is recommended, it would require it to go back to
15 the SSC, and we would have to get new projections from the
16 Science Center, and the SSC would have to review those
17 projections and approve them as also being consistent with BSIA,
18 and then we could add them into the document at that point. I
19 don't know how much time we have to accomplish that.

20

21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Sweetman and Ms. Boggs.

22

23 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Just a question, and what is our timeline to
24 complete this?

25

26 **MR. RINDONE:** It absolutely must be dealt with by June, and so,
27 when you figure it takes -- You know, the interim rule can be in
28 effect for 366 days from the date of implementation, and so we
29 really need to get it done by June, so that there's time for
30 NMFS to go through its approval process, which lasts about six
31 months, and so, if it goes final in June, if everything goes as
32 well as we could hope for, we will probably get it transmitted
33 in July, or early August, at the latest, and then, from that
34 point, that's when that six-month clock starts for the NMFS
35 mandatory review process, and so just trying to get it on the
36 books and have some idea of when it could be implemented, so
37 that they can do any withholding that they need to do from the
38 IFQ program, so that there is enough time to tell recreational
39 fleets what they should be expecting, and so June is the time to
40 do it.

41

42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

43

44 **MS. BOGGS:** I am about to show my complete ignorance, but I have
45 done -- We have talked about this for so long, and I went back
46 and I looked at my notes, and Andy was talking about Tmax, and,
47 in my notes that I had, talking to people way smarter than I am,
48 does that gain us anything between the Tmin? My notes said it

1 would just be one year, and it would be ten years, as opposed to
2 the eleven years, and so kind of back to Bob's argument, and I'm
3 completely out of my wheelhouse here, Ryan, and so help me out.

4
5 I mean, is that something that we should look at, because, if
6 it's a shorter time period, and you're already looking at a
7 closure in Option 2a and 3a, is that -- I mean, I don't know
8 what the difference might possibly be there. Thank you.

9
10 **MR. RINDONE:** Based on the estimates that we're riding on from
11 the SRFS run of the stock assessment, and assuming a 40 percent
12 SPR proxy for F of MSY, the shortest amount of time that the
13 stock could rebuild is eleven years, and so there's not a
14 shorter option than that, unless we make new assumptions about
15 what we think the stock would actually do during that time,
16 which we don't have that information to use right now, and so
17 eleven years is -- Ma'am.

18
19 **MS. BOGGS:** I am thinking out loud, and so Tmax will maybe
20 extend it ten years, and I am reading my notes wrong, and that's
21 why I wanted to bring it up, because I wasn't clear, and I'm
22 trying to get a clear understanding what it is that we're
23 talking about.

24
25 **MR. RINDONE:** So they all rebuild to the same place, and Tmin is
26 the shortest amount of time that it can rebuild to that
27 position. The other options, now two options, 75 percent of F
28 at MSY and then Tmin times two, also rebuild to the same place,
29 and, like Mara said, you can call them Tmax, the maximum time
30 allowable, and they also rebuild to the same place as Tmin, but
31 they just get there over a longer period of time.

32
33 What Mara and Andy are talking about is we could pick something
34 in between, and, from a functional standpoint, in trying to get
35 the information that we would need to pick something in between,
36 that's why I said what I said about having to get new
37 projections from the Science Center and having to have it
38 reviewed by the SSC and deemed BSIA and then bringing that back
39 to you guys.

40
41 Then we would need new season duration projections also to match
42 up to whatever that other option was, and you guys can consider
43 something in between, but it's not required that you do, but, if
44 you're not going to, then you should say why you're not going
45 to, and so, like Andy was saying, you have to have some
46 justification for why you're not going to do it, and you can't
47 just not do it.

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy.

2
3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and so I guess I wanted to
4 just add at least my thoughts and rationale, in terms of the
5 existing range, and so, first, timing can't be, in my view, a
6 consideration of why not to do something, right, and, yes, we're
7 under a statutory mandate, but, if it's a reasonable
8 alternative, right, we should be including it and adding it.

9
10 With that said, Tmin is essentially the shortest time to rebuild
11 this fishery at zero fishing mortality, and, when I say zero,
12 it's directed and discards, right, and, to me, that's
13 impractical, and it's unlikely to happen ever, right, and so, as
14 you move away then, from eleven years to a longer time period,
15 your likelihood of success, in terms of at least reducing
16 fishing mortality and achieving a reasonable reduction in both
17 the directed fishing mortality and the discards, is increased,
18 right, but with an allowance of more fishing activity, and so
19 we're balancing kind of socioeconomics with the reasonableness
20 of actually rebuilding the stock.

21
22 Although eighteen years is kind of between, you know, the eleven
23 and twenty-two, and it's based on Tmax, to me, it is kind of
24 bridging the gap, in terms of a pseudo target, and that's
25 probably the wrong way to describe it, but it is kind of in
26 between the maximum timeframe that we truly could consider and
27 the target time for rebuilding, and I would encourage -- We're
28 not at the point of selecting preferreds, but we could select
29 this, or we should select this, to kind of increase that
30 probability of rebuilding success and not go to the maximum
31 amount of time as allowed under the National Standards. We're
32 not there yet to discuss that, but I would certainly encourage
33 that, moving forward.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Anson.

36
37 **MR. ANSON:** I am trying to -- You know, I certainly have heard
38 Mara suggest to the council that there is, you know, a varied
39 suite of alternatives that are in documents that we discuss, and
40 ultimately send to the agency, but I guess, you know, in
41 relation to this, and I know we just kind of removed some
42 options, but the statement that we ought to consider a target, I
43 guess, for this particular document, considering the timing and
44 kind of the crunch that we may be under, or may not be under,
45 but, you know, I was thinking that we were under a fairly tight
46 timeline myself as well.

47
48 I guess I'm just -- You know, if this should be, I guess, a

1 standard practice, or something that we should always consider
2 for future documents of a similar nature, and I'm just a little
3 surprised that, you know, the request to include something, you
4 know, a target, I guess, T target, again specific to this
5 document, relative to the timing that we need to take action on
6 it.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Levy.

9

10 **MS. LEVY:** Thanks. Just to clarify, I wasn't requesting that
11 you add a T target. I was just making clear that the current
12 options in there come from what the guidelines explain are the
13 T_{max}, but I think that Andy kind of tried to point out that, in
14 this particular case, your T_{min} is eleven years, and your
15 shortest T_{max} is eighteen years, right, and so you've got seven
16 years of wiggle room, in terms of which you could pick a target,
17 and, perhaps, in this case, that's not enough wiggle room to try
18 to pick something, right, because the benefits of going two
19 years less, or three years less, are probably not going to be
20 significant with regard to the stock, and may or may not be
21 significant with regard to the socioeconomics, right, and so, in
22 this particular case, maybe that makes sense.

23

24 If you had a T_{max} that was forty-five years, and your T_{min} was
25 twelve years, I think you would have a little more trouble
26 saying there's nothing in between there that could be shorter,
27 and so all I was saying is we need to articulate that, because
28 these particular options are the T_{max} from the guidelines.

29

30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** So anywhere between eleven and eighteen years,
31 right, Kevin, and, I mean, we're talking about fractional gains,
32 if any, in the catch in either of the sectors, right, and so
33 there's no obvious win in between those. Kevin.

34

35 **MR. ANSON:** Yes, and that's what I was leaning toward as well,
36 is that there's maybe a couple hundred thousand pounds,
37 potentially, you know, just on a back-of-the-napkin calculation,
38 for some of the options we're dealing with, and so I would agree
39 that it, you know, probably shouldn't be included. Again, with
40 the timing of the document as well, but others can comment if
41 they would like. Thank you.

42

43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Is there any additional comments on this
44 particular alternative? Mr. Rindone.

45

46 **MR. RINDONE:** Just for some additional context on this, I mean,
47 part of the SSC's recommendation for the 40 percent SPR was to
48 build the stock to this more robust level, which all of these,

1 including any intermediary T target would do -- They would all
2 not get the stock rebuilt until it reaches that specific point,
3 and it's like 12.7 thousand metric tons, or something like that,
4 and I think it's a little over 12,000 metric tons of spawning
5 stock biomass.

6
7 They're all going to get you there, but they're just going to
8 get you there at a little bit different pace, and so what
9 happens in that time period? You have fishing pressure, which
10 the council would be keeping track of and would be able to keep
11 a pulse on, and then you have the potential, obviously, for red
12 tide, which the council could be responsive to if it knew that
13 one was happening, and it could take some sort of proactive
14 measures, if it deemed it appropriate and prudent to do so.

15
16 In the interim, you would also have the flexibility to use
17 things in your toolbox like framework actions to address things
18 as it would be appropriate to do so, but, just thinking about it
19 in terms of what it means for the biology of the stock, the
20 stock is going to be rebuilt to the same position regardless.
21 The things that the stock is going to endure in the interim,
22 that are primarily going to affect it, are going to be
23 anthropogenic influences, like fishing mortality, and ecological
24 influences, like red tide, and so those are the things that you
25 guys need to think about, in terms of the biological benefits or
26 deleterious effects to the stock, with regard to any of the
27 durations of time that these rebuilding periods would last.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I guess, with regard to this
30 alternative, we essentially have, you know, three options, based
31 on the motion that Mr. Gill made, and I'm not seeing any further
32 comment, Ryan, if you want to go ahead and move forward.

33
34 **MR. RINDONE:** Sure. Okay, and so this is Action 2, which talks
35 about the modification of the Gulf gag recreational fishing
36 season start date, and so Alternative 1 would retain the current
37 recreational fishing season opening date of June 1, and NMFS
38 would close harvest when the ACL is projected to be met, and
39 that last sentence there is applicable to all of these
40 alternatives.

41
42 We did this because this is essentially NMFS' responsibility,
43 regardless of any arbitrary closure date that the council might
44 otherwise recommend. If NMFS projects that it needs to close
45 the season sooner, it's its responsibility to prevent the ACL
46 from being exceeded. It will have to close the season sooner,
47 and so it just seemed cleaner to leave it as that.

48

1 Alternative 2 would open the recreational fishing season on
2 September 1, Alternative 3 on October 1, and Alternative 4 on
3 November 1, and these were the same opening dates that were
4 shown to you guys for options for the interim rule.

5
6 On this graph here, we have the landings, in pounds gutted
7 weight, on the Y-axis, and then by month on the X-axis, and the
8 dark line is 2019, and the gray line is 2020, the yellow line is
9 2021, and the projected landings for the mean of these years is
10 shown in the dotted-blue line, and so you can see how the
11 monthly landings varied, since these are previous years, by
12 year. Ms. Boggs.

13
14 **MS. BOGGS:** So I am really having trouble, and I have asked this
15 question before, and I guess I've never caught it on gag, and I
16 know I've asked about red snapper, but, if we have a seasonal
17 closure from January 1 to May 31, why do we have these landings
18 in March and April and May? I am guessing these are just rogue
19 fishermen?

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am going to, I guess, refer to the Regional
22 Office.

23
24 **MR. HOOD:** Maybe C.J. can help me with this, but I think there
25 was a certain time period when Florida had like a season in some
26 counties, and I think it was for gag, and that could have been
27 in 2019, and I think, you know, because gag are often found
28 inshore and stuff, some of those landings might -- Particularly
29 for the later years, they might be because, you know, people
30 just don't know what they're catching, and, you know, they catch
31 a nice fight, and, you know, they're fishing off a dock, or, you
32 know, in a bay or something like that, and they catch a nice-
33 sized fish, and they bring it home, not knowing what they're
34 doing, but I think, for 2019, it's probably the fact that
35 Florida was open in a couple of counties during that timeframe.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J. and then Andy.

38
39 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Peter is correct. We previously had the special
40 season in this four-county box area, Taylor, Wakulla, and other
41 counties, two other counties up in that area, and it was a
42 specialized season over there, but, when the interim rule went
43 into effect, FWC closed that season, and so that's why -- That
44 just happened last year, and so that's why there are some
45 landings.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

48

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** C.J. covered what I was going to say. Thanks.
2
3 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Chairman Diaz.
4
5 **MR. DIAZ:** I am not sure who this question is for, maybe Ryan or
6 maybe C.J. or maybe Andy, but so September 1 would be a start
7 date at a beginning of a wave, and October 1 would be in the
8 middle of a wave, an MRIP wave, and then November 1 would be at
9 a start of a wave too, and so I know we're using some SRFS
10 information and some MRIP information, and is it problematic to
11 start this season on October 1, as far as trying to do an in-
12 season closure? Does that create a problem, and I would like if
13 somebody could respond to that.
14
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.
16
17 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I mean, classically, we have preferred to start
18 seasons at the beginning of waves, to avoid splitting a wave,
19 right, and the challenges associated with that. This is a
20 combination of data that would have to be used for season
21 projections, right, but the large driver is going to be the SRFS
22 system, which generates estimates in one-month increments,
23 right, and so I think it's probably more reasonable to actually
24 be able to start, you know, now splitting a wave, just simply
25 because we're going to be reliant more on SRFS, at this stage,
26 for those projections.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J. and then Ms. Boggs.
29
30 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I appreciate the question, and so we also do
31 supplement the State Reef Fish Survey with the APAIS dockside
32 intercept survey, and so it expands a little bit beyond just the
33 months, but I will say that the State Reef Fish Survey is not
34 meant for in-season monitoring for gag grouper and in-season
35 management along those lines.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.
38
39 **MS. BOGGS:** So I know, when we were discussing the interim rule
40 and all the conversation, it was about the shallow-water grouper
41 in the fall is really good, the shallow-water depths, and the
42 release mortality is higher, and the fact that the State of
43 Florida was going to go consistent, if we kind of went along
44 those lines, and I'm going to have to eat crow now.
45
46 In talking to some of the fishermen down in Destin and Tampa and
47 St. Pete and further down, and you see that peak in June and
48 July, and one of our conversations, or one of the largest topics

1 around this table, is discards, and so now, if you close that
2 fishery in June and July, where it peaks, and my understanding
3 is these fish are around the red snapper, and are we not just
4 going to increase our dead discards and create more of a
5 problem?
6

7 Then, if you look at this chart, I mean, it does escalate in
8 October, and I don't know how we deal with this. The dead
9 discards, to me, is the main thing that we need to start trying
10 to deal with, and I have a suggestion, but this is not the right
11 place for this, but you've got two peak seasons, and I don't
12 know what we're going to do about the discards, because, in my
13 mind, to me, if you're red snapper fishing in October, November,
14 and December, and my understanding, and we don't grouper fish in
15 our area, and so I'm trying to get educated, is that's more of a
16 targeted fishery, whereas, in June and July, it may be more of
17 an incidental as well as targeted fishery, but I'm just trying
18 to get my head wrapped around what are we going to do with
19 discards, and is this going to increase our problem, if we look
20 at more of a fall season than keeping it in the June and July.
21

22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** It's a good question, and we've certainly
23 talked about it quite a bit. I'm looking around the room, and I
24 don't -- If Captain Walker is in the room, and, Ed, if you're
25 willing to come up to the podium, maybe I can ask you a few
26 questions, given that you're the chair of the Reef Fish AP. I
27 guess, to Susan's point, the questions would be, you know, can
28 you tell me a little bit about the co-distribution, I guess, of
29 red snapper and gag and then break that down seasonally.
30

31 **MR. ED WALKER:** I would be delighted, and I was actually --
32 Dylan Hubbard and I were just -- When you asked that question,
33 we started saying, you know, do you see red snapper and gag
34 overlap where you're fishing, which, where I fish, the answer is
35 no, and, now, I could go deeper and find gag and red snapper in
36 the same areas, but, in our fall season, which is my biggest
37 season, as a charter boat captain, we never catch any red
38 snapper, at all, because we're fishing in thirty, fifty, or
39 maybe sixty feet of water, and there's no red snapper in there
40 at all, and so, for us, it's a non-issue.
41

42 I certainly understand other parts of the State of Florida,
43 where, in red snapper season, you may well encounter a gag here
44 or there, but, where we are, in west-central Florida, I don't
45 think that the overlap is as big of an issue, and I have heard
46 the argument, since you've given me this opportunity to speak,
47 that perhaps we should have them both at the same time, the red
48 snapper season and the gag season, to reduce discards, and

1 there's two reasons that I would personally recommend against
2 that.

3
4 One is you don't really want the -- I lost my train of thought
5 for a second. A charter guy would prefer to have two seasons,
6 right, and, if you pile all the seasons into a short period of
7 time, he has less opportunity for charter. If gag is open, he
8 can go and fish for gag in gag season and red snapper in red
9 snapper season, and that's my feel. I would rather have two
10 seasons than one season. Was there another part of that
11 question?

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I guess, to Susan's point, if the season is
14 earlier, and the fish are deeper, and there is a greater chance
15 of cooccurrence, how are you going to deal -- Or how should we
16 consider dealing with the potential for a higher discard
17 mortality?

18
19 **MR. WALKER:** My personal opinion, I don't think you should open
20 gag in the warmer months, in September specifically, and you're
21 going to direct effort to deeper water, where you're more likely
22 to encounter males, which is stated in the document as one of
23 the objectives here, is to reduce pressure on those males, and
24 discard mortality is exponentially higher where we are, because,
25 in the fall season, in the cooler months, we're fishing in
26 shallower water, cooler water, with very, very low discards, and
27 the deeper -- You essentially are steering the effort depending
28 on the month you pick.

29
30 If it's warm, the effort in west Florida for gag moves deeper,
31 and that's just a fact, and, in the fall, people don't have to
32 go as far, and there are lower discards, and, essentially,
33 there's zero male interaction, and I say that from ten years of
34 gag research projects that I've been involved in.

35
36 I've brought most of my catch -- A good percentage of my catch
37 has been analyzed by the biologists, and so they will open them
38 up. We'll bring them in with the guts, and they will examine
39 the insides and see, for sure, if it's a male or a female, and
40 we've never caught a male, ever, that was documented by them,
41 and even an occasional dark-belly one, that looked like he might
42 have been potentially a male, it wasn't, and we've had a small
43 amount of what they call transitional, but, where we fish in the
44 fall, male interaction is not a problem, and red snapper
45 interaction is not a problem.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Ms. Boggs.

48

1 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I mean, I think we've got a real problem on
2 our hands, and we have the same issue with amberjack, and not
3 everybody fishes the same, and not all the fish are in the same
4 areas, and I had a fisherman tell me that he had to put thirty
5 pounds of weight on a descending device and could not get a gag
6 grouper to go down, and so these interactions -- It's different
7 for Ed, and it's different for this gentleman in Tampa, and it's
8 different for the northern Gulf, where I am, where we don't
9 catch them.

10
11 Here again, we're having this conversation about split seasons
12 and adaptive management and Amendment 41 and Amendment 42, and
13 we're not going to solve this problem, and I don't think
14 anything we do with this document is going to solve our problem.

15
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ed. I agree with you, Susan, and
17 I'm expecting that we're going to hear a fair amount of public
18 comment on this issue, right, because things are differently,
19 certainly, in the north Gulf, with regard to depth and
20 cooccurrence of those two particular species. I think you're
21 right on, right, and it's a complicated decision, and we're
22 going to have to be -- C.J.

23
24 **DR. SWEETMAN:** To that point, I understand what people are
25 saying here, but, when thinking of the entirety of Florida,
26 access to these fisheries are not the same in all of these
27 areas, and so that is why the commission, FWC, has been
28 supportive of the September season, to allow for that kind of
29 equitable access throughout the entirety of the State of
30 Florida.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, C.J. Again, just to
33 step back a little bit, right, and we're kind of working through
34 these various actions to prepare a public hearing document, and
35 so it's fairly time sensitive, and we do have some time to think
36 about the rationale for ultimately choosing some preferreds,
37 moving forward, and so Mr. Rindone.

38
39 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and he's in the room
40 somewhere, and I think Nick Haddad is around somewhere, and Nick
41 is the guy that's here to talk to you about the Return 'Em Right
42 program, but something that we observed, when we were out using
43 the descender devices, was that venting fish is critical to
44 getting some of that air out of their swim bladders, in order to
45 get them to go down, and so, if fishermen are having trouble
46 getting a fish to go down on a descender device, or they're
47 having to keep adding more and more weight, I guess the first
48 thing that I would ask is did you vent the fish?

1
2 If the fish has a giant balloon worth of air stuck inside its
3 abdominal cavity, it's going to require more weight. If it's a
4 considerably large fish, that could be a considerably large
5 amount of air, and so venting the fish is just a critical first
6 step in that process to descending that fish to get it down, and
7 so, I guess, Nick, I see your hat back there now, and is that --
8 As you're talking with folks, I guess that would just be
9 something to, I guess, investigate and see if that's a practice
10 that folks are understanding.

11
12 Our season duration projections here use estimated monthly
13 landings from 2019 to 2021, again using SRFS for the private
14 vessels and FES for shore and for-hire and the Southeast Region
15 Headboat Survey for the headboats. That's a nice fish, John.

16
17 Monthly landings were divided by the number of days per month,
18 to provide a daily catch rate and to estimate the projected
19 expected closure dates, and so, within these season duration
20 projections, weekdays and weekends are treated equally, which we
21 don't anticipate to have a strong effect here, given the
22 duration of time that these season duration projections cover,
23 and I think it would be more of an issue if we were talking ten
24 days to two weeks, but, since we're talking a couple of months
25 for most of these, it will smooth out. Mr. Gill.

26
27 **MR. GILL:** Thank you. Before we go to the next slide, if we
28 could go back to the estimate, and so, under our normal modes,
29 this is how we typically estimate usage rates going forward. In
30 this case though, to me, it's different. We're talking a
31 dramatically shorter season, a max of 50 percent of the previous
32 season, and we're talking about a dramatically smaller allowable
33 catch, and utilizing the standard estimating technology as a
34 proxy for what's going to happen during the fishing season, to
35 me, ignores the likely derby season that we're going to see,
36 that we're not going to capture.

37
38 I know it's difficult, but I think we have to be proactive and
39 add an adjustment to this approach that tries to accommodate, as
40 best we can, some consideration of the likely derby and reduced
41 catch effects on the catch rate, but not doing it, and we'll get
42 to that when we get into the alternatives, sets us up for a real
43 problem, because, if the catch rates are significantly off, on
44 these very small amounts, and check me if I'm wrong, but I think
45 gag has a payback, right, and we'll have a real problem.

46
47 I suggest that the estimate technique -- This is a good start,
48 but it needs to be adjusted for the likely impact that we're

1 going to get in this fishery at this time. Without it, I think
2 we're closing our eyes to an obvious correction factor, and,
3 granted, it's probably going to be very subjective, and you can
4 make some stabs at it, but we don't have the data for it, and I
5 understand that, but, if we don't try to provide our best input
6 to adjusting for it, we're at, or setting ourselves up, for a
7 real problem.

8
9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Before I go to Mr. Anson, Bob, I just want to
10 make sure that I understand what you're suggesting, or asking,
11 is that there's a projection here of the number of days, and
12 there is some confidence surrounding that, and your suggestion
13 is to aim towards the lower end of the confidence interval, to
14 be conservative? I'm not exactly sure where you were heading
15 with our potential action.

16
17 **MR. GILL:** What I'm suggesting is that this is projecting a
18 catch rate, a daily catch rate, that is grossly underestimating
19 the likely catch rate, and, consequently, we could blow out
20 whatever quota we have available to be caught.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I understand that. Mr. Anson and then
23 Ms. Boggs.

24
25 **MR. ANSON:** Bob brings up a good point, and one other thing to
26 consider, I guess, for this calculation, or exercise, to
27 determine season length would be to make sure that the harvest
28 that occurs, or portion of the harvest that occurs, from discard
29 mortality is also included on the frontend, because we're going
30 to have a shortened season, and so it will be spreading out or
31 including more days now that the season had been open, and won't
32 be open, and so that will be something else I think that ought
33 to be in the consideration, and I don't know if that's just
34 added up, you know, each year and then divided by the total
35 number of days, and I don't know how the method is, but I just
36 want to make sure that there is -- That is being accounted for,
37 or at least some expectation of additional out-of-season discard
38 mortality, because we've got to deal with discard mortality in
39 the recreational fishery for the monitoring of quota, but not
40 the commercial. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

43
44 **MS. BOGGS:** To this document, the Alternatives 2c and 2d, 2c and
45 3c, under this action, would we need to move that to Considered
46 but Rejected, since what we did in Action 1 was remove those
47 alternatives, because now you don't have -- Then I have another
48 question.

1
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ryan, to the first question?
3
4 **MR. RINDONE:** So, here, we would just remove the line for 2c,
5 and we would just delete that, because that's being moved to
6 Considered but Rejected, and those season duration projections
7 aren't necessary, and so this would be revised to just show what
8 you see now as just being 2b and 2d.
9
10 **MS. BOGGS:** Okay. I was just making sure that, one, we didn't
11 need a motion, and, number two is, based on the chart three
12 slides ahead, and you see that spike in October, and I thought I
13 understood that's when Captain Walker starts fishing, we have no
14 alternatives here that look at an October opening.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.
17
18 **MR. RINDONE:** The second column from the right is the October
19 opening, and so the Action 1 alternatives are shown in the left-
20 most column, and the Action 2 alternatives, or the season
21 opening dates, are shown across the top, and so June 1,
22 September 1, October 1, and November 1.
23
24 **MS. BOGGS:** So what you're showing is the closing date.
25
26 **MR. RINDONE:** Yes. That's what is shown in bold there. Sorry.
27 I didn't get to explain the chart yet, and Mr. Gill intercepted
28 me with his question, and so -- But I think we've got through
29 most of it now, and so the recreational ACT is shown here in
30 pounds gutted weight, because that's how it comes out of the
31 assessment, and so this slide is showing the 61 percent
32 recreational and 39 percent commercial, and so the status quo
33 allocation percentages, and the next one shows the 65/35.
34
35 There are one-day differences in the season duration projections
36 between those sector allocation options, but you guys will see
37 that, and, yes, and so that line there -- That row for
38 Alternative 2c, the nineteen years, we would just delete that,
39 because, if it's removed from Alternative 1, then it's not
40 applicable anymore to Alternative 2.
41
42 We can go ahead and show you guys the next slide, just so you
43 can see that too, and you can see the differences there, and
44 there's about a one-day difference between the alternatives, and
45 this is based on -- I forgot to mention this, and these two
46 tables, and these season duration projections, are based on the
47 projected yield from 2024, and so the first year that we would
48 expect this to be implemented in management, and so, with every

1 successive year, as the stock continues to rebuild, there would
2 be -- The recreational ACL would be expected to increase by some
3 amount through 2028.

4
5 The duration for which the recreational fishing season could be
6 open, all things being equal, would be assumed to also be able
7 to increase with time, as the ACL increases, and we've had a
8 couple of requests at this point, the one from Mr. Gill to
9 account for some of the uncertainty with respect to the
10 potential instigation of derby fishing behavior from the season
11 being so compressed, compared to what it's been, and then from
12 Mr. Anson about it being prudent to also account for dead
13 discards.

14
15 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We're going to take one quick question from
16 Ms. Levy, and then I'm going to probably let us have a break.
17 Ms. Levy.

18
19 **MS. LEVY:** It's not really a question, but it's just a comment
20 related to the discussion, and so just -- I mean, the dates are
21 there, based on the projections, right, but those are
22 projections based on current available data, and those dates are
23 not what are in the alternative, right, and the alternative has
24 the season start date, and it closes when NMFS, at the time,
25 projects that the catch limit is going to be met, and so, kind
26 of to get to all of those points, yes, there's a lot of
27 uncertainty, because you're compressing the season, and so NMFS
28 is going to have to take that into account when they're looking
29 at when the closure notice should actually go out, and we're
30 going to have that problem this year, right, because the interim
31 measures are changing the season date, and it has an end date
32 that the council put in there, but NMFS is still going to need
33 to look at what they think their best estimate of when that
34 interim catch level is going to be harvested and close, if
35 necessary, earlier.

36
37 Then, just on that point, at least you will have data from this
38 year, in terms of what the season change did, the start date
39 did, that NMFS can use next year, if you decide to change the
40 season through this amendment, and so just there's a lot of
41 moving parts, but, ultimately, you're picking the start,
42 acknowledging the uncertainty that that might create in the
43 projections, but NMFS is actually going to have to do those
44 projections and decide when to close.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy, do you want to follow-up, real quick,
47 and then we will probably take a break.

1 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and Mara covered a couple of
2 my comments. Two other things, and so, one, I've been chatting
3 with my staff, and we're trying to reconcile the numbers and
4 make sure that the projections are correct and that the
5 estimates in the presentation line up with our expectations,
6 because the graphic on Slide 16 would seem to indicate that the
7 June season would be shorter than the forty-nine days, and we're
8 just not sure if that's the correct figure or not, and so I just
9 wanted to acknowledge that we might have to come back, at Full
10 Council, with some revised estimates, if we find something
11 wrong.

12
13 The question I have is really for C.J., and so, thinking of this
14 from an implementation standpoint, the State of Florida is
15 really the primary harvester of gag, and there certainly is
16 harvest outside of Florida, but it's fairly minimal.

17
18 Right now, we've set up the alternatives to where the NMFS
19 Regional Administrator would close the fishery when we project
20 the catch limit to be met, right, taking into account some of
21 the factors that we've discussed. Has FWC kind of discussed
22 this, and is, you know, there any concerns with that concept?
23 I'm not sure really what other options we have, but it certainly
24 kind of sets up where we're going to need to be in collaboration
25 with FWC, and working with you closely, on those season
26 projections, to ensure alignment between the federal and state
27 seasons.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J.

30
31 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for the question,
32 Andy, and so we currently have, in rule, the interim rule
33 season, and so any modification to that season, even if it's a
34 day or so here and there, based on NMFS' projections for when
35 the end date would be, that would require us to ultimately go
36 back to the commission and modify the rule that we have on the
37 books there. Does that answer your question, Andy?

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. I think, Chairman Diaz, the next
40 kind of -- We can certainly come back after lunch and revisit
41 this a little bit, but we can also move into kind of some future
42 options for this document as well, and so I suggest, if you're
43 okay, that we take a break.

44
45 **MR. DIAZ:** Before we do take a break, I want to recognize a
46 former council member that's here, Mr. Myron Fischer, that's
47 standing up. Myron was a great council member and greatly
48 contributed to the council during his time here, and so it's

1 good to see you out there, Myron, and so thank you for coming to
2 spend some time with us. We appreciate it.

3
4 The council staff has got lunch ordered for us here, and the
5 hotel has provided it, and it's on the table behind us, and the
6 lunch is for council members and council staff, and we're going
7 to break for about thirty or so minutes here, and so if folks
8 kind of make sure to be in the room in about thirty minutes from
9 now, and we're making an effort to try to squeeze as much work
10 and get every dollar's worth of tax dollars that we're spending.
11 All right. Thirty minutes. Thank you.

12
13 (Whereupon, the meeting recessed for lunch on January 31, 2023.)

14
15 - - -

16
17 January 31, 2023

18
19 TUESDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

20
21 - - -

22
23 The Reef Fish Management Committee of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
24 Management Council reconvened at the Hilton Baton Rouge in Baton
25 Rouge, Louisiana on Tuesday afternoon, January 31, 2023, and was
26 called to order by Chairman Tom Frazer.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We're going to let Ryan get squared away, and
29 we're going to pick back up with the gag discussion, and so go
30 ahead, Ryan.

31
32 **MR. RINDONE:** Okay, and so, like I had stated previously, when
33 we're talking about the rounding issues and all that, we're
34 going to be updating all of this a little bit, but it gives you
35 a general idea of what you would be looking at for some of these
36 season durations.

37
38 You guys heard a little bit from Captain Walker about his
39 perspective about the seasons, and then there's a consideration
40 about discards, like Ms. Boggs and Mr. Anson were talking about,
41 and so, if there are any of these season opening dates that you
42 guys would like to exclude from consideration, we certainly
43 could entertain that.

44
45 I'm just thinking about producing the compounding amount of
46 analysis that has to be done between the alternatives that are
47 in Action 1 times the alternatives that are in Action 2, and so,
48 if there's anything that you guys don't really think that you

1 want to consider any further, you know, obviously, let us know
2 about that.

3
4 In October, you guys had passed a motion asking us to develop
5 some options for exploration for Amendment 56, and this includes
6 the summer recreational gag fishing season, lowering the
7 recreational bag limit, establishing the recreational vessel
8 limit, a commercial spawning season closure, spatial areas to
9 protect spawning gag, and commercial bycatch trip limits.

10
11 For the recreational fishing season, the IPT thought that this
12 was included in Alternative 1 of Action 2, which is a perfectly
13 viable choice that you guys could do, and you could elect to
14 continue to open things on June 1, and then NMFS would close the
15 fishing season when it projects the ACL would be met.

16
17 In terms of a split season, initially, when we were looking at
18 this alternative in this action under FES, with the interim
19 rule, it was only going to be a couple of weeks, and so, under
20 that, the IPT didn't recommend a split season, and the IPT would
21 maintain that only so far as it relates to a season that is
22 particularly short, and so, you know, if it's only a couple of
23 weeks or so, and you're trying to split that apart into separate
24 seasons -- I mean, it's going to be difficult enough to
25 precisely keep track of, you know, a season that's only a couple
26 of weeks long, never mind one that's about that long that's
27 split in half.

28
29 You would be looking at a, you know, season duration that is
30 perhaps a little over a month long, for a June 1 opening, and
31 so, again, splitting that -- We would have to look at that a
32 little bit more closely, but it could be that that particular --
33 That splitting that short of amount of time could pose -- It
34 could be problematic for season duration projections.

35
36 Like Mr. Gill had talked about, with respect to a derby, the
37 shorter the fishing season is, and there's been some literature
38 that Mr. Anson had also worked on that talks about the
39 relationship between derby fishing behavior and fishing season
40 brevity, and so, with respect to revising the recreational bag
41 limit and creating a recreational vessel limit, these are both
42 things that the IPT thought would be ripe for a follow-up
43 framework action, and so, following the development of Amendment
44 56 -- There are things that don't absolutely have to be included
45 in this amendment, and the main thing that has to, has to, be
46 included in this amendment is really Action 1.

47
48 For a commercial spawning season closure, the IPT had noted that

1 closing gag doesn't stop all fishing activity, and it just stops
2 directed fishing activity for gag and that some commercial
3 discards would be expected during a spawning closure, that there
4 would be some commercial discards from deeper water, and we
5 would expect higher relative discard mortality from deeper
6 water, compared to shallow water, despite cooler surface water
7 temperatures.

8
9 When we had talked to the fishermen in the past about this, the
10 fishermen had made it pretty clear, especially the commercial
11 guys, that they can redirect their efforts pretty quickly, if
12 they find that they're getting on top of gag, and that where
13 they would be fishing for say red grouper, and where they're
14 going to be fishing gag, are going to be in different areas,
15 different bottom composition.

16
17 If they're fishing for things like red snapper, how they would
18 fish for red snapper, they can tool to focus more so on
19 increasing their CPUE of red snapper, while also avoiding gag,
20 and so they didn't think that it was -- You know, that they
21 would be in such a position that they couldn't avoid gag if
22 there was a spawning season closure. That was what we had been
23 told, but hopefully we get some more current information,
24 current input, from them through public testimony.

25
26 For spatial areas, further analysis with this would be needed in
27 a follow-up document, and, right now, we have the Madison-
28 Swanson and Steamboat-Lumps marine protected areas in the
29 northeastern Gulf of Mexico, and both of those areas are closed
30 to all fishing activity, bottom fishing and surface trolling,
31 and so adding additional areas -- We would need to do quite a
32 bit of work to look at what areas, why, how, et cetera, and
33 then, for the commercial bycatch trip limits, the same thing,
34 and the gag are managed through the IFQ program, which doesn't
35 currently have a trip limit, but that's not to say that it
36 couldn't, if that's something that you guys wanted to explore,
37 but it would be a new -- It would be a new facet of management
38 in an IFQ program in the Gulf, and something that would just
39 need some further analysis than we have time to do in this
40 particular document, and so any question about any of that?

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs and then Mr. Gill.

43
44 **MS. BOGGS:** I don't necessarily have a question, but a comment,
45 and something that I would like the council staff to look at,
46 moving forward with maybe a framework action, and you alluded to
47 it in your previous slide, about bag limits and vessel limits,
48 and if I might just throw out something that I would like to

1 have staff look at, and I'm glad that I'm over here, because
2 Andy is going to throw something at me, but if we can look at
3 something like a two-fish-per-six-people limit, and keep the
4 fishery open year-round.

5
6 My point to that is, and I come back to this, is we are
7 constantly having a conversation, at this table, about discards,
8 and I alluded to -- It's like a child. If you tell a child that
9 they can't have the toy or whatever, they're going to go find a
10 way to get it, and so, if you have the access available to these
11 fishermen, they're most likely not going to want it as bad as if
12 you tell them, no, they can't have it, and it's just something
13 to look at.

14
15 Again, I'm trying to be creative, outside of the box, access,
16 all of these things that we have to look at as a council when we
17 make these decisions, and I don't know if it's a viable option,
18 but I think it's something we should maybe try to look at, and
19 so, if you did two fish per six people, a six-pack boat could
20 have one fish, and a multi-passenger, if they've got twelve or
21 more, they could have two fish, and it might help alleviate some
22 of these discards, as well as provide the access to the fishery.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ryan.

25
26 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, at two fish per six
27 people, a six-pack would be able to keep two fish.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Gill.

30
31 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ryan, would you talk a
32 little bit about the rationale for choosing the alternatives as
33 subject to agency closure, as opposed to picking closure on a
34 date certain?

35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** The agency is required to close fishing when it
37 projects that the ACL is going to be met, and so, one way or
38 another -- Even if you guys pick a September 1 opening, if the
39 agency has data that suggests that the ACL is going to be caught
40 before November 10, it's obligated to close fishing prior to
41 November 10, using the interim rule as an example here.

42
43 If it looks like fishing could be allowed to extend beyond
44 November 10, then it would close it on November 10, because that
45 was the closure date that was picked. For simplicity, in this
46 document, we've just let it rest as when the agency projects
47 that the ACL will be met, just for simplicity, and so, if you
48 guys were to pick arbitrary closure dates, or I guess not

1 arbitrary, and that's not appropriate, but predetermined closure
2 dates, you know, it's going to open on September 1, and you say
3 that we're going to close it October 31, the language in the
4 regulations would still be October 31 or when NMFS projects that
5 the ACL will be met, whichever occurs first.

6
7 In the event that it could last longer, you get a little bit of
8 savings in that year, that theoretically will accrue into the
9 following year. If the agency, again, projects, based on
10 whatever data it has, that it should close it sooner, then it
11 will close it before October 31 anyway, and so it really only
12 ends up as a benefit when the closure date that you predetermine
13 is expected to be before when you think the data are going to
14 suggest that the ACL would be met. Does that make sense?

15
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Bob.

17
18 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, and thank you, Ryan,
19 and so I guess part of my -- I am not pushing for a date
20 certain, but I'm just trying to understand it a little better,
21 because the way I see it is the information available, and
22 correct me if I'm wrong, Peter, but the information available to
23 make that closure is going to be relatively insignificant when
24 you're in the season, and so that says, to me, that you're going
25 to make the determination ahead of time. Well, if you're going
26 to make the determination ahead of time, why not just do it, and
27 so is that incorrect?

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Froeschke.

30
31 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I don't disagree with that logic, because it's
32 going to come up in amberjack, but one thing to think about, in
33 this case, is the information -- We'll probably get some
34 information from fishing in the interim rule that will help us
35 do this, although it may be later, and so I'm trying to think
36 that you don't want to hard-code it too short, and so, if you
37 get another week or two, based on the newer information, that
38 you're not stuck in that.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Either Mara or Andy, and you both have
41 your hands up.

42
43 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Just to add to the rationale, a lot of this
44 comes out in how we structure our accountability measures,
45 right, and, under a rebuilding plan, to me, we want to be -- We
46 want to ensure that we're hitting our targets, right, and that
47 we're not exceeding those catch limits, and, if we do, then we
48 have some accountability measures to adjust for them.

1
2 Keep in mind that all of the catch limits that we're considering
3 show a trajectory of increasing catch limits over the time
4 series as well, and so, if you hard-code a season, you
5 potentially aren't allowed to expand out from that season, yet
6 those higher catch limits allow for expanded fishing
7 opportunities as the fishery grows and increases in abundance,
8 right, and so there's the pro of, obviously, constraining catch,
9 but the con of ultimately not allowing that fishery to have more
10 access, if you're successfully rebuilding the stock.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Bob and then C.J.

13
14 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To that point, yes, and I
15 agree, but the flip side is, if you grossly miss the closure
16 date, and they grossly overfish, payback says that, next year,
17 if you think this year is hell, it's going to be worse, and we
18 go into this drive ourselves into a hole, and, given the
19 uncertainty on how these estimates are made, it seems, to me,
20 that we really want to bend over backwards so that we don't go
21 to the point where we drive the recreational into no season, and
22 this has the potential for doing that, and I am concerned about
23 that.

24
25 It seems, to me, that we ought to be proactive and say, well,
26 we've already expressed the council's desire not to have a
27 closed fishery, for any fishery, and, if we're setting up the
28 program to allow the possibility of that, we ought to do what we
29 can to minimize that happening, and that's what I'm getting to.

30
31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy, to that point, and then C.J.

32
33 **MR. STRELCHECK:** You bring up a very valid point, Bob, and I
34 know, in the Mid-Atlantic, they've been going through some
35 recreational reform initiatives, and they've implemented some
36 new ways of kind of managing the recreational sector to
37 potentially help with some of the stability and the volatility
38 from year to year.

39
40 That's, in part, I think the regulatory efficiencies initiative
41 that I spoke about yesterday, and things we want to be
42 exploring, and I'm not sure we can figure that out in time for
43 Amendment 56, but I agree with, obviously, your points that we
44 want to set ourselves up for success with the management
45 approach we take.

46
47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J.

48

1 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and so I've got a couple of
2 points to make here, two separate ones, kind of. First, about
3 the seasons themselves, and so I get a little bit worrisome, a
4 little fearful, with potentially changing some of these season
5 dates a little bit more towards the fall, and let me just paint
6 a scenario here of why I'm fearful.

7
8 If the council ultimately decides to move forward with a later
9 season date in the fall, that is where that harvest is primarily
10 coming from state waters there, during that time of the year,
11 and, if we end up in a scenario where the commission ultimately
12 decides not to move forward with that season in the fall, then
13 we're kind of -- Everyone is kind of out of luck there, because,
14 when you're targeting the fish in the fall, that's state waters,
15 and, if the commission doesn't move forward with that, then that
16 access is not going to be there, and then the offshore component
17 -- That's not where those fish are primarily targeted during
18 that time of the year, and so I'm just kind of painting that
19 picture.

20
21 Then another thing about -- So, switching subjects a little bit
22 here, as it relates to some of these follow-up framework
23 actions, I just want to kind of point this out for the council,
24 and the South Atlantic is currently trying to work on gag
25 grouper as well, and they're trying to align all of their
26 recreational regulations with black grouper as well, due to
27 misidentification issues.

28
29 I'm thinking that this could be something important to consider
30 on the Gulf side too, and identification issues are still a
31 concern there, and I think that was kind of noted in a previous
32 joint council committee on the south Florida management issues
33 between the South Atlantic Council and the Gulf Council, and,
34 ultimately, we weren't able -- FWC was not able to complete a
35 stock assessment on black grouper, because of these
36 identification issues in the past, and so I just kind of want to
37 throw that out there for consideration.

38
39 The council already does manage black grouper and gag grouper
40 with the same minimum size limits, at twenty-four inches.
41 However, the size at 50 percent maturity is around twenty-eight
42 inches for black grouper, and so it's already kind of being
43 cognizant that there are identification issues within this
44 fishery, these two fisheries, and so I'm just kind of throwing
45 that out there for future consideration, if we decide to move
46 forward with some of these follow-up framework actions, as it
47 relates to the bag limits and the vessel limits.

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

2
3 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Thanks for those comments, C.J., and this gets
4 back as well to my comment about making sure we're coordinating
5 with the FWC, and so we're rapidly heading towards final action
6 in June, right, and, if there's potential for this to go off the
7 tracks with what FWC believes is kind of the path to go on, we
8 need to know that sooner rather than later and have the council
9 advised with regard to changes, which might be problematic now,
10 because we're now going to be seeing this again in April, after
11 your commission meets, right, but, the more we can coordinate on
12 this, the better.

13
14 The other question I have is for Ryan, and then I guess I will
15 make a few comments, and so I noted, on the previous slide, you
16 were deliberate in saying framework action for a couple of the
17 add-ons, but, in this, you say follow-up document, and is that
18 intentional, or could those also be a framework action?

19
20 **MR. RINDONE:** I don't know explicitly, because, if we're talking
21 about a new spatial area closure, I guess I would look to Mara,
22 and I think that falls within plan amendment territory, and
23 then, if we're talking about a modification to the IFQ program
24 like this, something that's not currently provided for within
25 the program, I think that's also a plan amendment, but, again, I
26 am not certain on that, and so that's why I had those listed as
27 follow-up documents, and it's also -- You know, we have two
28 amendments that are exploring changes to the IFQ programs as it
29 is, and, depending on the pace of development there, if the
30 commercial bycatch limit during the spawning season was
31 something that could be appended within there, and it's all
32 subject-relevant anyway, because it's a modification to the
33 program. There are a lot of moving parts involved, and that's
34 why I left those kind of ambiguous.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy.

37
38 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right, and so that's helpful, and we can
39 figure out the mechanism, and so, based on the last council
40 meeting, I had made the motion to explore these options within
41 Amendment 56, and you're coming back and recommending that it be
42 outside of Amendment 56, which I agree with, given our statutory
43 deadlines, and do you need a motion to proceed with a framework
44 action, or other document, for these remaining actions at this
45 point, or is that sufficient, given staff direction already?

46
47 **MR. RINDONE:** The motion here was to develop it for exploration
48 in 56, and so we're recommending that that not be done, for the

1 reasons that you stated, and I think a motion asking for a
2 follow-up framework action would be good, and there is the
3 potential for us to be able to include several things together
4 in that, and so, if we were exploring say the gag recreational
5 bag limit, and the recreational vessel limit, and maybe there's
6 a couple of other things that we could ultimately throw into
7 that, to try to get more done with, you know, the same framework
8 action, if we have a couple other things that you guys have made
9 motions about thus far, like gray snapper maybe, or, I don't
10 know, but we could look at that, to try to gain some efficiency.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy.

13
14 **MR. STRELCHECK:** All right, and I'm prepared to make a motion,
15 but I'm certainly open to discussion, and so I think everything
16 still stands there, with the exception of the recreational gag
17 fishing season, and certainly I think you make a good point
18 about whether or not there would be utility in a gag commercial
19 spawning season closure.

20
21 Just for the council's awareness, I spent a lot of time talking
22 with researchers who study gag spawning behavior between the
23 last meeting and this meeting, and, you know, one of the
24 concerns that I have with rebuilding this stock is the low
25 percentage of males in the population, and the potential for
26 sperm limitation, and we do know that there is males that occur
27 inshore of kind of the forty to eighty-meter break offshore,
28 but, primarily, there is spawning that's occurring in those
29 areas, and we have established two spatial area closures,
30 Madison-Swanson and Steamboat Lumps, and we have The Edges,
31 which is a seasonal closed area, and that's a really important
32 area for spawning populations of gag, and I think there's a lot
33 of new science and information emerging that's probably worth
34 looking into and exploring, and it potentially could help us
35 with this rebuilding plan.

36
37 There's also some evidence of pre-spawning aggregations and
38 information emerging, in terms of kind of nearshore or inshore,
39 that's probably not ready for primetime from a scientific
40 standpoint and publication standpoint, but, once again, there is
41 kind of areas of vulnerability for gag grouper, and I think this
42 species is unique, in that there potentially is ways that we can
43 better protect the population and bolster the rebuilding plan,
44 and so my recommendation is to consider all of the options that
45 are on the slide there, with the exception of the gag fishing
46 season, because that's in the current amendment, in a follow-on
47 document.

48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy, can you just repeat the last part of
2 that? I was looking at something else. Sorry.
3
4 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I will just make a motion, and so if you can
5 copy that. It would be to direct staff to develop the following
6 options for exploration in a framework action, or other
7 document, or, actually, a document or amendment, a framework
8 action or amendment, and then delete the first bullet.
9
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so we've got a motion on the
11 board. The motion is to direct staff to develop options for
12 exploration in a framework action or amendment: lowering the gag
13 bag limit, establishing a gag vessel limit, commercial spawning
14 season closure, spatial areas to protect spawning gag, and
15 commercial bycatch trip limits. Is there a second to that
16 motion? It's seconded by Ms. Boggs. Okay. Andy, I think you
17 have an opportunity to discuss it further, but I thought you set
18 it up well, but, if you wanted to add to it, go ahead.
19
20 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Not really much more to add. I mean, I spoke
21 about this at the last meeting, and the current amendment
22 considers changes to the catch limit, allocation, and a
23 recreational season. We have a stock that we need to rebuild in
24 the next fifteen to twenty years, depending on the rebuilding
25 plan that's selected.
26
27 For the reason that I just spoke about, with regard to the life
28 history, I think there's certainly reasonable options that we
29 could be looking at that could help bolster the rebuilding plan,
30 as well as potentially reduce bycatch or change access, with
31 regard to allowing for retention of gag.
32
33 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thanks, Andy. C.J.
34
35 **DR. SWEETMAN:** A question for you, Andy. Would you be amenable,
36 given the black grouper thing that I just mentioned, to
37 incorporating that into this analysis, specifically at it
38 relates to the bag and vessel limit?
39
40 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Yes, if you have some suggested language.
41
42 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Maybe it could just be lowering the gag and black
43 grouper bag limit and establishing a gag and black grouper
44 vessel limit.
45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am just looking at that for a second, C.J.
47 I am not sure where the document will go, and I'm worried that
48 the word "and", you know, obligates you to dealing with the

1 black grouper, and so, I mean, you could say, maybe, "lowering
2 the gag and possibly black grouper", you know what I'm saying,
3 or something like that, because I'm not sure where it's going to
4 end up, and it may be in the weeds a bit.

5

6 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Yes, that's fine.

7

8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ryan.

9

10 **MR. RINDONE:** Well, I think it's -- To develop the following
11 options for exploration in a framework, and so, if you guys
12 ultimately determined that it wasn't appropriate, or necessary,
13 or whatever, for not including black grouper, then we would
14 cleave that off of there, and I don't know that you have to say
15 "possibly". I mean, you could, theoretically, add whatever
16 species you want into this, and it's your prerogative, but
17 starting here tells us that, you know, when we're looking at the
18 recreational bag limit, we should have options that are
19 considerate of gag and black grouper, and, if you guys cleave
20 one of those off, then fine, and the same with the recreational
21 vessel limit. If everybody is comfortable with that, I mean, I
22 think we know where you're going with it.

23

24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. I think we're all good. Ms.
25 Boggs.

26

27 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, that answered the question that I was going to
28 ask about this, but I have another question when we're done with
29 this.

30

31 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Mr. Gill.

32

33 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I guess I'm struck by
34 we're loading up a fair amount of work, and I don't know what
35 everybody is thinking about, in terms of what's the likelihood
36 of these items actually getting to action, and so, in a sense, I
37 view this as, at least in some part, as a wish-list, and, in
38 that sense, I would like to think about where we might prune it,
39 reduce the workload, and focus it on things that are likely to
40 make a difference and likely to make it through the end date.

41

42 With that in mind, I think the bag limits and the vessel limits
43 might be the place where that could make a difference. I am
44 having difficulty trying to assess a strong win for commercial
45 bycatch trip limits, for example, and I'm not sure where I see
46 the real value of that is, and, spatial areas, I can buy-off on
47 looking at that, although the record on spatial areas to help
48 gag hasn't worked, at least in terms of improving males, and so

1 I'm not real comfortable with just throwing out a big wish-list
2 and saying, hey, take a look at it, because all we're doing it
3 loading it up, and I'm not sure that we're really focusing on
4 trying to get to a better place with gag and black by this what
5 I would call a wish-list.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Gill. Ms. Boggs.

8
9 **MS. BOGGS:** To Mr. Gill's point, I kind of understand where C.J.
10 is going with the gag and the black grouper, because of the
11 identification issue, and that's been an issue in the past. At
12 one time, I think you could just catch grouper, and it all
13 counted, because nobody could tell the difference, but,
14 possibly, and if Andy is amenable to this, you know, pare out
15 the commercial spawning season closure and commercial bycatch
16 trip limits, which is what we typically do with a document that
17 has both commercial and recreational combined in it.

18
19 The spatial areas, it seems like we've already done a lot, or
20 some, of that, and maybe not to the extent that we could, but it
21 would help -- Would it be better, and I'm just asking, and, of
22 course, Andy, would have to be, being the maker of the motion,
23 but, if we took out the commercial components of this, and
24 either did it in a separate motion or addressed it at a later
25 time.

26
27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Andy.

28
29 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I am amenable to paring this motion back, and I
30 never really liked the commercial spawning season closure, and
31 it was an idea that was brought forward from the commercial
32 industry, but, given it's an IFQ, I think that could be removed,
33 and then the bycatch trip limit is something that, yes, we don't
34 typically have for an IFQ program, but, given the low quotas, it
35 was an option that I had suggested putting on the table, at
36 least during the spawning season, to avoid direct targeting of
37 gag, and fishermen burning through quota, but I'm amendable to
38 removing that as well. **So go ahead and take out Bullets 3 and**
39 **5.**

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** The seconder of the motion, you're good with
42 that? I just, again -- I am trying to figure out the spatial
43 areas to protect spawning gag. The spawning gag, that would
44 also affect the commercial sector, right, Andy, and I'm trying
45 to see why that one is left in there, because the other two are
46 specific to the commercial, but, aside from that, right, I mean,
47 I think it will be interesting to see where the public comment
48 goes this time, and in future meetings as well, right, and I

1 think there may be some interest, or at least some discussion,
2 amongst the commercial sector to looking at those spawning
3 season potential actions, but, again, I think they can be
4 followed-up in a separate document, but my question is do you
5 want to keep Number 3 in this?
6

7 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Based on the conversations I've had with
8 researchers that study gag, and everything that they're learning
9 about spawning, I would say absolutely, yes, and I think this is
10 an important component to protecting the male gag population.
11

12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Is there any further discussion of the
13 motion? **Not seeing any, is there any opposition to this motion?**
14 **The motion passes.** Mr. Chairman.
15

16 **MR. DIAZ:** I don't know if this is a question, or maybe somebody
17 could help educate me, but, whenever we talk about a stock
18 that's recruitment-limited, to me, that says that's a great
19 stock for a candidate for stock enhancement, and, I mean, do you
20 all know of anybody that's doing stock enhancement currently
21 with gag? If you don't, is there any way that we can influence,
22 or maybe write a letter to try to help influence, some research
23 dollars, or some grant dollars, to try to steer some money
24 towards some stock enhancement projects for gag, and amberjack
25 is probably a good candidate too, but gag is a better candidate,
26 because there are so few males, and so I don't know if Clay, or
27 Andy, wants to try to respond to that, or if they think we could
28 do anything to try to impact any of those dollars.
29

30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Porch.
31

32 **DR. PORCH:** I think there's a few RFPs out there that one could
33 try to submit a proposal for restocking. I don't know how
34 favorably it would be met for something like gag, and I don't
35 think there's a lot of confidence out there that the
36 aquacultured gag, when released into the wild, would have a high
37 survival rate, and it would be an interesting study.
38

39 We've had that conversation with red snapper, with the idea of
40 having some artificial reefs that you set aside, and then you
41 could restock them and allow fishermen essentially to fish year-
42 round in these limited areas that you stock, but the key
43 question would be would the young red snapper survive, because
44 there are issues.
45

46 For instance, if you feed them at the top of the tank, they get
47 used to feeding at the surface, and then everything eats them,
48 and so you have to figure out ways -- They do a lot of work like

1 this with salmon, trying to train them to avoid predators before
2 they release them as fingerlings, with some limited success, and
3 so I think work like that would be of interest, if you could
4 somehow train the juvenile gags to avoid predators when they're
5 released, it would certainly have some potential for a stock
6 like gag, which, you know, the number of fish isn't that large,
7 but I could look at some RFPs that might be amenable to those
8 kind of proposals and send them to the council staff, if you
9 want to distribute it.

10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I think we might be done with gag. Ms.
12 Boggs.

13
14 **MS. BOGGS:** Sorry. I wanted to ask Ryan, and I've got to find
15 it, and it's in the document itself, and it's Table B1, and it
16 says "recreational gag landings, pounds gutted weight, by two-
17 month waves", but the question being we used to, and it's
18 different for every species, but we would see a chart, or we
19 could see a chart, where it showed the landings, and, since it's
20 such a question, with this fishery, of where the fish are being
21 landed, is it possible to see, you know, northwest Florida,
22 south Florida, central Florida, by area, Texas, and, I mean,
23 just do you recall -- I mean, we've seen these tables before.

24
25 **MR. RINDONE:** So, when you think of how gag fishing operates in
26 the West Florida Shelf, there's essentially three areas, or I
27 guess I could describe four, and so you have like the Panhandle
28 region, the Big Bend region, down to a little bit south of Cedar
29 Key, and then you have west-central Florida, and taking that all
30 the way down to let's call it Sarasota, and then, south of
31 Sarasota, we'll call that southwest Florida.

32
33 The majority of the fish are landed in that west-central zone.
34 The majority of the biomass exists in that west-central zone and
35 that Big Bend zone, and so the landings are going to be coming
36 into that west-central Florida area, and so, you know, people
37 fishing from, you know, New Port Richey and Clearwater and
38 Dunedin and Tampa Bay and St. Pete, all the way south into
39 Sarasota, and like that's where most of that effort is going to
40 be coming from. We call the Big Bend area the forgotten coast,
41 because it's just less densely populated, at least for now.

42
43 As far as like regionally, where the landings are coming from, I
44 hope that answers that, but, as far as breaking that out into
45 those zones explicitly, C.J., call me on this, but I believe the
46 way that FWC regionally partitions its landings is in five
47 zones, and there's a northwest, a west-central, Florida Keys, a
48 southeast, and a northeast. There's generally five core zones,

1 and the Florida Keys is just Monroe County.

2
3 The northwest goes to Levy County, like Escambia east to Levy
4 County, and then west-central is Levy all the way down to the
5 south side of Charlotte County, and so -- Well, Phil knows, and
6 so the south end of Charlotte County, right before you get to
7 Monroe County, and then -- So it's a big region within there,
8 but the amount of gag, from an abundance standpoint, decreases
9 as you head south and those waters get warmer, and, like we
10 heard from Captain Walker before, you know, these fish tend to
11 bite better in cooler water, and they don't seem to bite very
12 well when the water is really warm, and, once you get into that
13 like southwest Florida Keys water, it stays warmer throughout
14 the year, and you just see fewer of them, and it's not that you
15 don't catch them in the Keys, and you occasionally do, but a lot
16 more of those landings are coming from much further north.

17

18 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan.

19

20 **MS. BOGGS:** So, if I'm understanding what you just said, is this
21 information available on the FWC website?

22

23 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I can get that information. The five counties is
24 correct, the specific -- Or the five zones is correct, and, the
25 specific county delineations, I would have to look that up.

26

27 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan.

28

29 **MS. BOGGS:** I don't need it broken down by that. I'm just
30 trying to get an idea where they're catching them and when
31 they're catching them, because we're having a lot of discussion
32 about this, and I thought that might be another visual way to
33 look at where the fish are being caught and when they're being
34 caught. Thank you.

35

36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

37

38 **MR. RINDONE:** Well, it's where, when, and how, and so, in the
39 summer months, you have coincidence with the red snapper season,
40 and so there's a lot of hook-and-line effort offshore, but
41 there's also a lot of spearfishing effort for gag much closer to
42 shore, like under bridges and things like that, that are easy to
43 access, and then there's obviously spearfishing offshore also,
44 but, in those interim distances, you know, shallower than say
45 twenty to thirty meters, where the water is pretty warm top to
46 bottom, the bite is just generally not that great.

47

48 That's not to say that you won't catch any, but you're going to

1 catch far less in those depths than you will later in the fall,
2 when the water cools off and the bite picks up, and so the
3 suspicion is that there's a strong relationship between
4 decreasing temperature and increased feeding activity.

5
6 As you move, you know, beyond the summer months, June, July,
7 August, and into September, in September, it's still pretty warm
8 out. We don't really see cold fronts really start to move in
9 until like the end of October, or the beginning of November, and
10 that's when more of that fishing effort starts to happen closer
11 to shore, because the bite starts to pick up, and the water is
12 starting to cool down towards the bottom, and so the bite gets a
13 little bit more excited then.

14
15 It's a lot of hook-and-line effort and spearfishing effort
16 closer to shore during those fall months, and so it's not as
17 much directed effort having to go much further offshore,
18 because, basically, you have fishermen that would otherwise be
19 driving right over the top of boat limits to go and try and
20 catch -- Perhaps catch bigger fish in deeper water, and so that
21 effort tends to concentrate closer to shore, like C.J. was
22 talking about, in the fall.

23
24 It's a where, when, and how. This is one of the more dynamic
25 things that we've dealt with, as far as reef fish is concerned,
26 because the way that gag behave is a little different than how
27 red grouper behave, and we've talked a lot about red grouper in
28 the last couple of years, and gag have some similarities, but
29 they have a lot of differences too in just their behavior during
30 different times of the year and where they tend to aggregate and
31 how they behave in different water temperatures and lots of
32 things.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I just want to make sure that I'm capturing
35 what Susan was trying to say, is there is clearly, in the
36 document that we just looked at, or the presentation, and there
37 are peaks in June, and there are peaks in the fall, and,
38 essentially, what you were asking is do we have the spatial data
39 that would allow us to determine if there is some geographic
40 kind of focus on that peak, and so, C.J., is it possible, do you
41 think, to look at that, at some point in time?

42
43 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Yes, and I can check with some of our staff, to
44 see if we can get some of that information for the council.

45
46 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you very much. Okay, and so
47 is there any more discussion with regard to gag? All right. If
48 not, I think we're going to move to amberjack. Mr. Chair, do

1 you want us to move right into that? Okay, and so Dr. Froeschke
2 will lead us through that.

3
4 **DRAFT FRAMEWORK ACTION: MODIFY THE GREATER AMBERJACK AND JACKS**
5 **COMPLEX MANAGEMENT MEASURES**
6

7 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. We'll pull up the action guide. Somewhat
8 feeding of the discussion that we just had for gag, at this last
9 meeting, we completed final action on Reef Fish 54, which
10 revised the catch limit, sector allocation, and rebuilding plan
11 for amberjack, and, similar to gag, there's a tight timeline
12 associated with that document, and so there are some additional
13 management changes that you all might consider for amberjack,
14 and that's in this companion framework action that we're going
15 to begin discussing today.

16
17 At the last meeting, we discussed this some, and the two actions
18 that are in the document right now are modifications of the
19 recreational closed season and modifications of the commercial
20 trip limit, and so those are the things that I will be looking
21 for your feedback on today, on trying to refine the actions and
22 alternatives, and we'll try to get this thing further fleshed-
23 out in April, and with final action in June, would be ideal.
24 There is some timing associated, in hopes that we could get this
25 set up for the 2024 fishing season.

26
27 We'll bring up the document, and so the first thing, just on the
28 title page there, you'll notice that it's the amberjack and the
29 jacks complex, and so one of the things that I'm going to be
30 soliciting your feedback on is, in Action 1, the recreational --
31 Modification of the recreational fixed closed season, and is
32 there any interest in developing compatible jacks regulations,
33 and so we can go through some of that, as well as in the
34 background, and so just keep that in mind.

35
36 What I would like to do is just kind of get you up to speed on -
37 - There's a few tables in the document, and I apologize that I
38 didn't have time to put together a presentation for this
39 document, and let's start with Table 1.1.2, just to make sure
40 that everyone is at a common understanding here.

41
42 This document references -- These are the catch limits that will
43 be implemented in Reef Fish 54, and so there's a recreational
44 ACL of 404,000 pounds, and it's a large reduction from what is
45 previously in place, and then the commercial is 101,000 pounds,
46 and both sectors have ACTs, and that's what the season will be
47 targeted toward, and so that 335,000, and that's in MRIP-FES
48 units, and then the commercial ACT is in the commercial units,

1 and so now we'll be on the new 80/20 allocation, and so Table
2 1.1.3.

3
4 This is the current regulations for the actions that we're going
5 to discuss today, and there's a recreational fishing year, which
6 is different from the fishing season, and so this one, unlike
7 most reef fish, it begins on August 1, and it extends through
8 the end of July, and so, for example, for the 2023 fishing year,
9 the recreational landings started counting towards that in
10 August, when the recreational season opened in 2022.

11
12 There was the emergency rule in place, which modified that
13 season, which will expire prior to the implementation of this,
14 in all likelihood, and so this would be thinking towards 2024,
15 which would be the 2023-2024 recreational fishing season.

16
17 For the minimum size limit, it's not subject to change in this,
18 but it's thirty-four inches for the recreational and thirty-six
19 inches for the commercial. The bag limit is one fish per person
20 per day on the rec side and a 1,000-pound gutted weight trip
21 limit on the commercial, with step-down to 250 pounds once 75
22 percent of the ACT has been reached. Since that's been
23 implemented, we have not used the step-down provision as part of
24 that.

25
26 Table 1.1.4, and just kind of scroll to the bottom, of the more
27 recent years, and, just real quick, what I just wanted to note
28 here is the second column there is the commercial landings, and
29 the third column is the recreational, in FES currency, and so
30 both of those are well above what we're going to be managing
31 toward for the new catch limit, and so, hence, the reason why
32 these actions are being considered.

33
34 If we go next to -- Just keep scrolling down. Okay, and so stop
35 right there. A little bit of background on the jacks complex,
36 and so the jacks complex was created in the General ACL/AM
37 Amendment in 2011, I believe, and so there's three species,
38 almaco jack, banded rudderfish, and lesser amberjack.

39
40 The potential, or the rationale, for considering this, as
41 juveniles -- These don't grow as large as greater amberjack, and
42 so a legal greater amberjack is very unlikely to be confused
43 with one of these. However, as juveniles, some of these may
44 look close enough that they're misidentified and inadvertently
45 landed, or greater amberjack are inadvertently landed as one of
46 the other species, and there were some management actions put in
47 place, the slot limits and things, to try to mitigate some of
48 this.

1
2 Emily and I, we've done a little bit of sleuthing, I guess,
3 looking around and trying to ask questions and things, to try to
4 see if this, you know, is a real problem, and we're working on
5 that, and it seems like there is potential that this could be an
6 issue. We have a figure that Dr. Marcus Drymon -- In some of
7 their work, they put together a guide, trying to spread
8 awareness of how to better identify these things, and we kind of
9 talked to them, and there was a reason they put that together,
10 and so that's something to think about, and not necessarily
11 right here, but I did put those in there.

12
13 We're not considering, at least at this time, any changes to the
14 commercial component of how this is, and so scroll down to the
15 next table here, and this is something to think about.

16
17 As far as the management of this, it's a management of the
18 complex, and so the ACL is just a summation of these three
19 species, and the ACL, you will see in that second-to-right
20 column, and then the total landings in that middle column there,
21 and so what you will see is, in 2021, and in 2019, there have
22 been overages on this complex of the ACL.

23
24 I believe it's currently listed as overfishing, and that's sort
25 of related, but not directly, and the issue here -- Again, this
26 would be more of a measure to potentially reduce the harvest of
27 greater amberjack, but, I mean, it is -- They do catch them. My
28 understanding is it's not necessarily a targeted fishery, but
29 they do interact with them, and it's likely, if we adopted --
30 Right now, it's a year-round season, unless there's a closure,
31 but it's likely, if we were to develop compatible regulations,
32 that the harvest of these would be constrained quite a bit, and
33 so that's something to think about.

34
35 Okay, and let's go down to I think to the infographic, if you
36 scroll down, and so this is an infographic that's in there, and,
37 again, this is from Mississippi Sea Grant, and it just gives
38 some background information, and I won't go through it, but it
39 kind of helps contextualize the potential for misidentification
40 in here, and so it does seem to be something worth thinking
41 through a little bit, but it's in there, and there's a QR code
42 and some more information, if you're interested.

43
44 Okay, and let's go through to Action 1, if there are no
45 questions on some of this background information, and so I will
46 start on Action 1. Again, this is the recreational fixed closed
47 season for amberjack. Is there a question?

48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** J.D. has a question.
2
3 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. John, a question. On page
4 13, I noticed that the years 1982, 1987, and 1992 are
5 substantially higher in the recreational numbers, and I'm just
6 curious to why.
7
8 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Are you talking about the table of landings?
9
10 **MR. DUGAS:** Yes, sir.
11
12 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I can't offer you an explanation, and I know
13 that this comes up every assessment and things, and we've worked
14 through the landings, and I would refer you to Dr. Porch or
15 something about those specifically, and I think some of them are
16 related to spikes in the for-hire and things, but I don't know
17 exactly why.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, John.
20
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay. Let's go back to Action 1. I will start
22 -- You will notice that there was an updated version that was
23 sent. At the last council meeting, Ms. Boggs made a motion to
24 include a November-December fixed closed season, and I forgot to
25 include that in the draft document that I posted in the briefing
26 book. For purposes of discussion, I have added it here, so that
27 we can discuss it, and I have not done more than that, but I
28 certainly will do that in the future, and so, again, I do
29 apologize for that.
30
31 This is kind of a late-breaking document, and so there will be
32 some additional analyses and things that are necessary to fill
33 in some of the closures, but a couple of things that I want to
34 get your feedback on is your thoughts on the seasons, and are
35 there additional ones that you want, or are there any of these
36 that you want to remove, and so that's one question.
37
38 Another question is, if you refer to gag, we kind of went
39 through this the way the seasons are structured, and where we
40 had the season open on Day X, and then it will close when it's
41 projected to be met, and the way that we've always done
42 amberjack is more -- We've always had a kind of hard-coded end
43 date, start and end dates.
44
45 As these seasons are probably shorter than we've ever done, I
46 think it would be worth discussing and getting some, perhaps,
47 input from Ms. Levy on whether we would want to go sort of the
48 other way and say we want the season open on Date X, and, you

1 know, hopefully this interim rule will give us some better
2 information on the catch rates and some of the seasons that
3 we're considering here, and so I don't know how we want to do
4 that, and I would be curious if there's any committee input, or
5 from Ms. Levy, about that.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so we just had a similar
8 situation with gag, right, and so, at the end of the day, if you
9 have a start date, NMFS is going to project when the quota is
10 caught, right, and so they're going to close it regardless, and
11 so, Andy or Mara, do you want to weigh-in on that again?

12
13 **MS. LEVY:** I'm not really going to weigh-in, and I guess, to me,
14 amberjack, or at least the way it's set up now, is a bit
15 different, because you purposely did a split season, right, and,
16 now, whether you can do that with the amount of catch there is
17 to work with at this point, I don't know, and so, you know, it
18 might not be feasible to keep it set up like this, but I think
19 that's a discussion for you all.

20
21 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Good point. Thank you. C.J.

22
23 **DR. SWEETMAN:** So an additional thought for consideration here
24 is, yes, maybe with the exception of almaco, these are
25 notoriously tricky species to differentiate between them, and so
26 I understand the identification issues there.

27
28 Having said that, specific to the seasons, we're kind of looking
29 at a very short season for greater amberjack, and I really would
30 hate to put additional closed access, reduced access, to these
31 fisheries that aren't necessarily in as poor shape as greater
32 amberjack, but, having said that, I'm wondering if an additional
33 consideration that we could throw on here, rather than
34 completely sync-up the greater amberjack season with this other
35 jack complex, and maybe it's just -- Maybe something lesser, and
36 maybe it's during the spawning season for greater amberjack that
37 those two fisheries are closed together, to mitigate any of
38 those issues of incidental harvest of the spawning greater
39 amberjack, and that's just something for consideration.

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thank you, C.J.

42
43 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay, and so, essentially, what we have here is
44 the Alternative 2 is open August 1 to August 31, and so I'll
45 just give you the dates, and then there's a table that will help
46 inform this a little bit. Alternative 3 is September and
47 October, and then Alternative 4 is the November and December,
48 which is not -- If you scroll down, Bernie, there's a table that

1 kind of gives you some information on the projected harvest.

2
3 This table, and, again, Alternative 4 is not in there, and I
4 will mention that one momentarily, but, as you can see,
5 Alternative 1 is the no action, and it would project to go way
6 over, and so that landings minus the ACL, or the ACT, and,
7 again, we're going to manage toward the ACT, and so we're way
8 over that.

9
10 Alternative 2 is this August 1 through August 31, and the
11 projected landings would be 535,000 pounds, and so that's over,
12 and so, when I was looking at the data that we have now, which,
13 again, could be updated, perhaps, I think it would be about an
14 August 19 closing date, and so I was trying to figure out on
15 whether you would want to -- If we were going that route,
16 whether you would want to state the alternatives that way, to
17 kind of give a more realistic idea of what they would be, but
18 then, if we got more information later, and it said, no, no, you
19 could actually have two more weeks or something, and so I don't
20 know how that would go.

21
22 Likewise, the September-October one is actually slightly under,
23 and so the catch rate in August is much higher than September
24 and October, and so you would actually -- You know, probably, if
25 you were going to go that route, and try to actually make a
26 projection and get the date, you probably could go a few more
27 days.

28
29 The November-December one, the way these catch rates are done is
30 we would look at what catch rates in the recent past have been
31 during those months, or waves, and we haven't been open in
32 November or December for amberjack in at least ten years, and
33 maybe a little longer, and so I took a quick look, and so we
34 would have to come up with something different to try to figure
35 that one out. That's not to say that we can't do that, but it
36 probably would be less precise than the other ones. I will take
37 any questions or feedback on that part.

38
39 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Anson.

40
41 **MR. ANSON:** A question, Dr. Froeschke, on this table. It
42 doesn't explicitly state it, and I assume it's just all the
43 pounds that are listed here, ACL, ACT, projected landings and
44 all that, and that is specific to greater amberjack, and that
45 does not include the jacks complex?

46
47 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Correct.

48

1 **MR. ANSON:** Because, in the text, it talks about jacks complex
2 and greater amberjack kind of together, and so maybe just a
3 suggestion would be to add greater amberjack into the table, the
4 table heading, is all.
5
6 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Sure.
7
8 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, and one more thing relative to looking at
9 kind of these trends in catch and such, is take that and add
10 another table, or to expand the table you had for the jacks
11 complex, to include maybe by wave and by state, if you have that
12 available for the recreational, for the future iteration.
13
14 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay.
15
16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Any more suggestions or comments? I am not
17 seeing any, John.
18
19 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay, and so I take that as, for the seasons,
20 you're satisfied with those alternatives, and there aren't any
21 additional ones or any of those that you want to remove.
22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J.
24
25 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Is that I just said not something that would be
26 factored into this?
27
28 **DR. FROESCHKE:** I think it could be, but I was going to do the
29 seasons and then talk about the option, and I am going to bug
30 you about the jacks complex momentarily.
31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan. John, just to make sure, again, and so
33 there's four alternatives, and so Alternatives 3 and 4, at this
34 point, are the only two that would keep you under what the
35 projected quota is, right?
36
37 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes and no. I mean, if we were to go to
38 Alternative 2, in practice, the way that would operationalize is
39 that you would open on August 1, and then NMFS would do a
40 projection, and, if they projected that it would close before
41 August 31, then it would close sooner than that.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I've got it, and so we're all good.
44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** All of those are a little -- That's why it's a
46 little bit funky trying to figure out the best way to do that.
47
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Understood.

1
2 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay, and so for --
3
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Hold on, real quick. I think Mara wants to
5 say something.
6
7 **MS. LEVY:** Well, just to kind of explain why it's worded like
8 that, because, in the regulations, what we have are fixed closed
9 seasons, right, and so it's saying when it's closed, and it's
10 not saying when it's open, and so what this is doing is changing
11 those fixed closed seasons to give you those open months, unless
12 there is a projection that it needs to close earlier.
13
14 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Yes, I get it. All right. Go ahead, John.
15
16 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Okay, and so now the second part -- For each
17 alternative option, 2, 3, and 4, there's an Option a, and it's
18 the same one, and there may be a better way to do that, and I
19 just could have made it into the second alternative, and I might
20 do that, but, anyway, this is the Option a that would modify the
21 recreational fishing season for the jacks complex, and either
22 Option a is to be compatible -- If we wanted to do something to
23 say do a March through May closure, or something like that, we
24 could add an Option b, or, if the committee is not interested in
25 those, we could just remove them, and so I would be interested
26 in some feedback.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** C.J.
29
30 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I think I would be in favor of something along
31 those lines for adding an additional option, within that jacks
32 complex there, to consider that, and what did you say, March
33 through May?
34
35 **DR. FROESCHKE:** That's what the commercial closed season is,
36 but, I mean, the rec season would be -- Well, it's going to be
37 closed along the way, and so, if there's some subset of that,
38 and you could do January through June, or whatever.
39
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You can do it, C.J.
41
42 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay, and so do you need a motion for this or
43 just a recommendation?
44
45 **DR. FROESCHKE:** It would be helpful to me, I think, if you don't
46 mind.
47
48 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay. I'm just trying to form this on the fly

1 here, and certainly feel free to help out, John. In Action 1,
2 to add an Option b that would be -- There we go. Modify the
3 recreational fishing season for the jacks complex such that the
4 season is only -- Okay. Then we would modify such that the
5 season is open -- Or no. It would be closed.

6
7 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just say open, and, when you want it open, we'll
8 fix it.

9
10 **DR. SWEETMAN:** Okay. So open would be June through February for
11 the jacks complex. Are you following me, John? Okay.

12
13 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so we have that motion on the
14 board. Is there a second for that? One more time. Is there a
15 second for that motion? I will second it for discussion. Go
16 ahead, C.J.

17
18 **DR. SWEETMAN:** So the entire point here is so that we're not
19 further restricting harvest from the jacks complex, which does
20 not seem to have significant fishery issues there, and so it's a
21 way for us to separate out the issues that are associated with
22 greater amberjack, while also accounting for the identification
23 issues that are associated with these other species, and it kind
24 of somewhat syncs up the conservation issues that we're
25 concerned with, as it relates to greater amberjack, but it
26 allows for a little bit more of a threading of the needle, if
27 you will, for flexibility for the other jacks complex, and
28 that's my rationale for this here.

29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** John.

31
32 **DR. FROESCHKE:** One thing we can try to do, for the next version
33 of this, is get catch rates for the jacks complex by wave, and
34 so that's probably a little bit more information to contemplate
35 this further.

36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so you feel pretty confident
38 that you can work through that? Okay. Ms. Boggs.

39
40 **MS. BOGGS:** Please tell me we track these landings for the jacks
41 complex. I'm on the website, and I see amberjack, but I don't
42 see anything that references the lesser amberjack, almaco jack,
43 and banded rudderfish, and, John, why did you have to complicate
44 this even more? I see a lot of pushback from the fishermen, I
45 think, on this, and I may be wrong, and I understand, because
46 there is identification issues with the lesser amberjack, but,
47 again, now we're creating a new season, and it just -- We can't
48 keep up with what we've got, much less trying to add something

1 to it, but my main question is where do I find the data on the
2 jacks complex, because I'm not able to find it.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Peter Hood.

5

6 **MR. HOOD:** Susan, if you go to the stock ACL page, remember that
7 we have a recreational and commercial quota for greater
8 amberjack, and so, if you're on the stock ACL, it's -- You've
9 got it? Okay.

10

11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Kevin Anson.

12

13 **MR. ANSON:** I mean, I understand this, but just, maybe to Mara,
14 we don't -- Administratively, we don't need to set up a fishing
15 season for the jacks complex, because the fishing season, right
16 now, is January through December, is it not, and so would we
17 also have to address a fishing season identification in this
18 document, if we're trying to -- As it's written right now, you
19 can just simply state June to December and then January to
20 February, and I understand that, but I just want to make sure
21 that, if we need to change the fishing season status,
22 administratively, to align more with what we are doing with
23 greater amberjack, and I'm just asking the question of if we
24 need to do it.

25

26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mara, and then it looks like John may want to
27 weigh-in, and then I've got J.D.

28

29 **MS. LEVY:** Well, so there's the fishing year, which is kind of
30 how we track the catch limit, and then there's the open or
31 closed seasons, or however you want to talk about it, and so I
32 don't read this as changing the fishing year for the jacks
33 complex, but what it would do, in terms of the regulation, is
34 establish a fixed closed season, right, to allow these months to
35 be open.

36

37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. You're good, John? J.D.

38

39 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A question for John, and
40 would it be less confusing to add another action for the jacks
41 complex, instead of tagging on, or adding on, to what's there
42 already?

43

44 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Well, I think part -- I don't think we need an
45 action, necessarily, and I think the way that I would
46 restructure this is, instead of having the Options a and b
47 repeat for each one of those, is to add an alternative that says
48 this can be selected in combination of Alternatives 2, 3, and 4,

1 or something, and do it that way, and we've done that in the
2 past. I struggled with how to do this, whether it was an action
3 or a sub-action or whatever, and this is what we landed on, but
4 it's subject to improvement.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

7
8 **MS. BOGGS:** So what do we do in this instance when we're looking
9 at the jacks complex that's in MRFSS, and you've got the
10 amberjack that's in FES, and now we're going to have to have a
11 stock assessment, and, I mean, I think -- Well, I mean, it's
12 like now we're comparing apples and oranges, and I don't
13 understand how this all works out in the end, because it's like
14 now we're got two different datasets that we're putting in the
15 same document, and am I completely wrong?

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** John, to that point, and then Andy.

18
19 **DR. FROESCHKE:** You're correct in that the jacks, I believe, is
20 in the MRFSS currency, which is different, obviously, from
21 amberjack, but it doesn't necessarily prevent us from doing
22 this. I mean, the jacks complex is -- We're not up against a
23 quota, per se, and that's not the issue, and it's just to reduce
24 it. In a perfect world, we certainly could convert the jacks to
25 the FES, either here or preferably some other action with all
26 the other ones, but I don't think it necessarily prevents us
27 from doing this, but it's one more wrinkle.

28
29 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

30
31 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess just to hopefully put it more simply,
32 and that three-month closure of the jacks complex is intended to
33 prevent harvest of greater amberjack that might be misidentified
34 and harvested as those jacks within the complex, right, and so
35 we're trying to afford greater amberjack additional protection
36 to help the rebuilding plan, but not making it so restrictive
37 that the jacks complex is only open when greater amberjack is
38 open.

39
40 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I'm going to try to move this along,
41 and we can certainly take a vote on this, and we can, if
42 necessary, revisit it in Full Council, but all those -- **Is there**
43 **anybody opposed to the motion? Seeing no opposition, the motion**
44 **carries.** John.

45
46 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Let's go to Action 2, if you could bring that
47 up. For Action 2, it addresses the commercial trip limit. This
48 is something that we have worked on with a number of years, and

1 we began with a 2,000-pound trip limit, several years ago, and
2 then it went down to 1,500, and then to 1,000, with a 250-pound
3 step-down, which we have not used that portion, although, with
4 the reduction in the commercial ACT from Amendment 54, it's
5 likely that we would use that.

6
7 The alternatives that we have are reduce the commercial trip
8 limits to 250 pounds all year long, and then the way the
9 alternatives -- Since the commercial is in gutted weight, the
10 alternatives are structured that way, and then the whole weight
11 conversion, which the ACTs and things are in, are in the
12 parentheses, and so it's a minor conversion, but just for your
13 information.

14
15 Then, Alternative 3, this came from a recommendation of the Reef
16 Fish AP, at their October meeting, and they recommended, if we
17 were going to consider a reduction in trip limit going to
18 numbers of fish, rather than a weight, because, when you start
19 getting down to small trips, you have the potential either to be
20 over by a small amount, inadvertently, or high-grading or other
21 things that we don't want could arise, and so their preference
22 would be a number of fish. That way, you know, if you have five
23 fish, you know you're good, that kind of a thing.

24
25 They actually recommended a five-fish, with a two-fish step-
26 down, and this is one of those that we need to do some analysis
27 on there, and I didn't put it in there, and I don't think, based
28 on what I've looked at so far, that that would be necessary. My
29 plan would be to try to further flesh-out what would anticipate,
30 if a closure would be necessary, and, if it is, we'll try to put
31 that in and bring it back.

32
33 The average weight on the commercial is just a little over
34 thirty pounds, and so I put, in the parentheses, just for the
35 purposes of comparison, and so that would be about a 150-pound
36 trip limit, for five fish. Any feedback on that?

37
38 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Go ahead, Chris.

39
40 **MR. CHRIS SCHIEBLE:** So I get the five-fish concept here,
41 because, you know, just to be able to count fish makes it a
42 whole lot easier to estimate what you have, instead of having to
43 guess advance weights before you land, right, but what I don't
44 follow is, if Alternative 2 is 250 pounds, and we're saying that
45 five fish is roughly 150 pounds gutted weight, why wouldn't we
46 have seven as option, to be 210, based on that math? Maybe
47 seven fish, 210 pounds gutted weight, as a two-fish step-down,
48 and is that --

1
2 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.
3
4 **MR. RINDONE:** You guys could. Five fish is what the AP
5 recommended, and they figured that their average weight was a
6 little bit higher than what the data showed, at thirty pounds,
7 and they thought it was a little bit closer to fifty pounds.
8 They might look at it a little bit differently, knowing whatever
9 the -- You know, that the average weight is a little bit lower,
10 but five fish is what they had recommended, and they had likened
11 it akin to trying to direct the commercial amberjack fishery to
12 something more like what the commercial fleet has experienced
13 with gray triggerfish, where it's more of a bycatch situation,
14 and they're not directly targeting them, but, if they happen to
15 catch them, then they don't have to discard them, and so it
16 would reduce discard mortality, and it would allow them to bring
17 something back, but it wouldn't be targeting them.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Froeschke.
20
21 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Yes, and what he said, and, again, I mean,
22 that's why we're here, and so, if you want seven fish as an
23 option, or something, put it on the board, and we're happy to do
24 it.
25
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Chris.
27
28 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Well, I mean, I was just looking at the math
29 here, but, if they're thinking that they're closer to, you know,
30 fifty, or fifty-five, pounds a fish, then you're going to be
31 over the Alternative 2 weight, right, and, if we went to seven -
32 - Is that the AP was -- Why they selected five?
33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone and then Mr. Gill.
35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** Well, again, that's what they had surmised, but,
37 you know, it's the fishermen that are in the room, right, and
38 those fishermen represent a subset of all of the fishermen from
39 all of the fleets, and not just the commercial fleet, and so the
40 assumed fifty-pound average that was discussed during the AP
41 meeting could have just been the experience of the fishermen
42 that were in the room. Clearly, if the data show it's thirty
43 pounds, fleet-wide, then it's probably closer to thirty pounds
44 fleet-wide, and so it's fisheries-dependent data there, and, I
45 mean, it's pretty decent on the commercial side. Like Dr.
46 Froeschke said, if you guys want to look at another option,
47 that's your prerogative, and you can do that.
48

1 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right, and so I think Ryan answered Mr.
2 Gill's question, and so it's back to you, Chris.
3
4 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** Well, I make a motion then to put an Alternative
5 4 in there to establish a commercial trip limit of seven fish,
6 210 pounds.
7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay, and so we'll get that motion up on the
9 board. While we're doing that, is there a second for that?
10 It's seconded by Mr. Burris. Go ahead, Chris.
11
12 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I guess my rationale for this is what John said
13 earlier, that, you know, back in 2020, we dropped the commercial
14 trip limit to what's written in Alternative 1 right there, and
15 we have yet to have to utilize that step-down rule in the
16 commercial sector, and so it seems like we're imposing some
17 action here that's really not going to give us any benefit, if
18 we haven't had to use the step-down rule in three years, and so
19 I just don't follow that this is going to give us much of a
20 savings.
21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Froeschke.
23
24 **DR. FROESCHKE:** The difference is though that we're stepping the
25 quota down by 78 percent or so on the commercial side, and so,
26 you know, we're -- So the commercial quota, right now, is like
27 335,000 pounds, and, when 54 goes into place, it's going to be
28 93,000 pounds, and so we're going to hit it.
29
30 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.
31
32 **MR. STRELCHECK:** To make sure I'm clear, the recommendation is
33 seven fish, 210 pounds? Is that right?
34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Good catch, Andy.
36
37 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I guess my suggestion is, rather than add an
38 Alternative 4, and, I mean, we're really kind of splitting
39 hairs, and it's a small trip limit, and so we can just modify
40 Alternative 2 to be an eight-fish trip limit, approximately 250
41 pounds, 240 pounds.
42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I am just -- I'm looking at the document here.
44 Mr. Gill.
45
46 **MR. GILL:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and so I don't see that
47 rationale, Andy, because what you're basically saying is
48 Alternative 2 in pounds and Alternative 3 in number of fish,

1 and, well, I think some gradation to make that decision, as to
2 what we think is best, given the status of AJs, is warranted,
3 and, by your suggestion, you're eliminating that, and so I can't
4 support that change.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Again, we're in the early stages of
7 this document, and, essentially, we've got two action items, and
8 we've made some suggested changes, or modifications, to both of
9 those action items, and I think we're going to hear some public
10 testimony that has bearing on both of these, both from the
11 recreational side of the world and the commercial side, and so
12 we'll revisit it, certainly, in Full Council, but, in the
13 interim, let's go ahead and -- **Is there anybody opposed to this**
14 **motion?** Okay. **I am not seeing any, and the motion carries.**
15 John.

16
17 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Just one clean-up item on this, and so, at the
18 last meeting, there was a request for a decision tool, and so
19 that's a possibility. To-date, since we've only had one action
20 each for each sector, it didn't seem necessary. If there's
21 still interest in doing that, we'll try. If you feel like you
22 have enough information to decide some of this, then we won't.

23
24 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** My question, John, would be how much time and
25 effort does it take to create a decision tool?

26
27 **DR. FROESCHKE:** Not that much, but I'm just trying to figure out
28 -- For example, in the commercial, there wouldn't be a lot, and,
29 I mean, you would have a pound of fish and a slider, and this is
30 your ACT, and how many do you want kind of thing, and I don't
31 know that there would be a whole lot to populate it, and the
32 other one maybe, with the rec, but, if there's interest, I will
33 work on it.

34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Peter and then Chris Schieble.

36
37 **MR. HOOD:** I just wanted to mention that we're going to be an
38 analyst down for a little while, and so a decision tool does
39 take time, and it does take some work, and so, if there's a way
40 that we can avoid that, that would be better, you know, better
41 than, you know, trying to really push people to do a decision
42 tool that might not help too much. Thanks.

43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Chris.

45
46 **MR. SCHIEBLE:** I think a decision tool was me suggesting that at
47 the last meeting, and it was including the Action 2 that was
48 formerly in here, and we saw this as a presentation, before we

1 had a document, which was the size limit change, from thirty-
2 four to thirty-six for the recreational, and what I wanted, or
3 intended, to try to see with that was what percent of harvest
4 savings that would give us, in combination with other options in
5 here, but, now that that's no longer in the document, I don't
6 think a decision tool is necessary, because there won't be
7 enough of a combination of savings, and so you can remove that,
8 if you want.

9
10 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I'm not hearing anybody clamoring for a
11 decision tool, John, and we'll save you a little bit of time,
12 and, Peter, your analysts a little bit of time as well. All
13 right. Thanks, Chris. Any other input on AJs? Mr. Chair.

14
15 **MR. DIAZ:** I am going to take a little bit of your time, Dr.
16 Frazer, and so we don't have much to work with here. It's
17 335,000 pounds for the entire Gulf of Mexico, and Mr. Gill
18 mentioned, earlier, his concerns about us going over and having
19 paybacks and all those types of things, and I mentioned this at
20 a previous meeting, and I promise you that I'm not trying to
21 down MRIP, and, actually, I know MRIP is one of the best data
22 collection systems out there, probably in the world, but I have
23 mentioned, in a small state, there are problems, and, to my
24 knowledge, we have not tried to deal with problems in the State
25 of Mississippi.

26
27 On two separate occasions, one wave of MRIP, related to
28 amberjack, one dockside sampler intercepting one fisherman
29 bringing in one amberjack, throws crazy numbers, and Wave 2, and
30 this is March and April, a time that's not peak fishing in
31 Mississippi, and we don't have that many people, and it's very
32 windy there, and it's still cool, and so Wave 2, about 300,000
33 fish for one wave in Mississippi for amberjack, and what made me
34 think about this is J.D. asked about some of the high numbers in
35 some of the years.

36
37 We don't have a way to deal with something that is not possible
38 and not plausible, and so, in the past, Mississippi gets these,
39 and I have complained it when we talk about calibrations for red
40 snapper, and we have to eat this, and we have to accept it, but,
41 right now, if one amberjack hits the dock in the State of
42 Mississippi, it's going to cause the whole Gulf of Mexico to
43 have to do a payback, because we don't have enough fish to deal
44 with it.

45
46 Why can't there be a way -- In Mississippi, and I'm not
47 complaining. The MRIP people have been working with us, and
48 we've talked back and forth, and Mississippi has been working

1 with consultants, and they're trying to increase their sample
2 size, and they're doing everything they can do to make the
3 survey better on their end, and I think they're doing everything
4 they can do, and I know MRIP is trying to work with us, but why
5 can't we deal with an outlier?
6

7 Why can't we -- If we've got something that we know is not
8 possible, and is not plausible, I'm not saying throw it out, and
9 I don't want to do that, but, if we've got an outlier, can't we
10 come up with a scientific method to smooth it, average it, in
11 some kind of way? That's not the only time this has happened,
12 and this has happened twice, and it also happened in 2020, and
13 it threw almost 300,000 pounds, and so it's a very real
14 possibility that this could happen.
15

16 This council can't do it, and I think folks from MRIP is going
17 to have to do it, but maybe we could put some pressure on it,
18 and I don't want to hurt the program. I want the program to be
19 stronger, and I think, if we find a way to deal with legitimate
20 problems, it is stronger, but so, anyway, I just bring it up,
21 because if one fish is caught in Mississippi, then a lot of
22 people is going to be impacted. Anyway, that's enough for now,
23 and hopefully you've got a good response, Dr. Porch. We need
24 your help, and so thank you, Dr. Frazer.
25

26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** You're welcome, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Porch.
27

28 **DR. PORCH:** I'm here to help. What you're describing, in many
29 cases, it's an outlier, and it's just the fact that it's low
30 sample sizes, right, a low number of intercepts, but it's not
31 necessarily an outlier, and there are procedures that the MRIP
32 program can use to screen outliers when there is, for instance,
33 a case where supposedly somebody brought, you know, a hundred
34 fish to the dock, or something like that, and that doesn't seem
35 plausible, but, when you're talking about, okay, one fish goes
36 to the dock, and then it gets multiplied up, it's really a low
37 sample size issue and not, technically speaking, an outlier.
38

39 There is a way to deal with that, and that is to move from
40 trying to monitor recreational ACLs every year and using a
41 multiyear average, and that's allowed in the National Standard
42 Guidelines, and so, for instance, using the three-year running
43 average, and I think that's something the council should begin
44 looking into for many species.
45

46 **MR. DIAZ:** I would welcome us using those things, and, if our
47 SSC could look at them, when these things hit, and try to pull
48 those out, if that's possible for the SSC to do that, and that

1 would be wonderful. If it has to be done at the MRIP level, at
2 least if it could be considered, it would be a big step forward.
3 Thank you.

4
5 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.

6
7 **MR. RINDONE:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. When we're doing the stock
8 assessments, there are different techniques that have been used
9 in the past to smooth different years, based on justifications
10 at the assessment workshop, or, in some cases, the data workshop
11 has determined, and then those decisions at the data workshop
12 are then validated in the assessment process.

13
14 Typically, from MRIP, when those landings data are received, as
15 long as there wasn't a reason in the way in which the surveys
16 were conducted that would bias that result higher or lower, that
17 the survey was conducted in a way that it's supposed to be
18 conducted, then that point estimate is put forward as it is. We
19 tend to see more of that strong variation though in earlier
20 years than we do in the more recent years, when we're talking
21 Gulf-wide.

22
23 State-specific issues, specifically as you described for
24 Mississippi, I think are different than the Gulf-wide issues,
25 like when Mr. Dugas pointed out the three years in the amberjack
26 landings, and so it may be that, next time that we look at
27 amberjack, that particular attention is paid to the magnitude of
28 those, and it might be determined that, because of the magnitude
29 of difference in those landings for those years -- The panel
30 might determine that it's appropriate to smooth that in some way
31 or another, and sometimes it's just taking the average of the
32 surrounding years or some similar approach.

33
34 **MR. DIAZ:** Just to that point, and I don't want to eat up too
35 much of our time, but I have talked to the staff at Mississippi,
36 and it's not exclusive to the State of Mississippi. There's
37 been some numbers that are highly irregular from the State of
38 Alabama and from Florida. I do think it's way more pronounced
39 in Mississippi, and more noticeable, but I don't think it's
40 exclusive to the State of Mississippi. Thank you.

41
42 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Dugas.

43
44 **MR. DUGAS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. In regard to Dale's comments,
45 this is another example of going down the road of state
46 management, or regional management, and I feel like I say this
47 every meeting, and I know it's at the bottom of the list for
48 amberjack, but it's something that maybe we should look at

1 moving up the list, just because of Dale's comments.

2
3 Another thing that I would like to point out is I think that we
4 should be fishing the biomass and not robbing Peter to pay Paul
5 across the Gulf, and I'm very confused with that whole scenario,
6 and that's my comments. Thanks.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. I am just going to pop-in, real quick,
9 and say this is not a new conversation. We've been having it
10 for a long time, and, you know, we're going to have a similar
11 discussion when we go into the red snapper calibrations, and it
12 was a discussion point there, and we're going to have
13 representatives from S&T, and Richard Cody will be here, but I
14 think everybody recognizes the problems, right, and we can't
15 just stop one sampling program and just start up a suite of
16 others.

17
18 It's going to take a little bit of time, and I think people are
19 cognizant of the problem. You know, can we get there fast
20 enough? Probably not, to please everybody, but there's a
21 concerted effort to move forward, and so I think I will leave
22 the discussion in amberjack there. Mr. Chairman, we're going to
23 then transition, although it looks like Dr. Simmons wanted to
24 say something. Go ahead, Carrie.

25
26 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, and so I think
27 it was to Dr. Porch's response, and we used to use moving
28 averages, when I first started working for the council, and I
29 remember because the National Standard Guidelines, and the
30 annual catch limits and catch targets, and we moved away from
31 that. We moved away from those moving averages that we had set,
32 because of those guidelines, and because, of the way the
33 accountability measures are set up for overfished stocks, such
34 as amberjack, I'm not sure that's possible either.

35
36 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Porch.

37
38 **DR. PORCH:** Maybe, at some point, we can come in with a
39 presentation, but NS 1 does allow you to do that, and the
40 council doesn't necessarily have to review it every single year,
41 and you certainly don't have to look at what the catches were in
42 any particular year, when there's that high level of
43 uncertainty, and there's a white paper that the Office of
44 Science and Technology developed, with a team of scientists,
45 including representatives from the Science Center, and I think
46 the South Atlantic Council SSC, and that would be of interest,
47 but I think it's time to start exploring options like that,
48 looking at multiyear ACLs, because this isn't going to be unique

1 to amberjack, as you already mentioned.

2
3 It's a number of other species, plus it's unlikely that the
4 resources are going to be made available to be able to develop
5 precise monitoring programs for all the species that you care
6 about, and so you have to find a way to work around it.

7
8 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Thanks, Clay. Mr. Anson.

9
10 **MR. ANSON:** So I don't know if we need a formal motion to
11 request that, or if, Clay, you can just instruct staff to bring
12 that to us as soon as possible, because I agree with you that
13 these are issues that we have before us, relative to the data,
14 relative to, you know, the stocks, and the status, that we have
15 of certain species, and, if we have an opportunity to be
16 flexible in how we're able to monitor those landings, relative
17 to ACLs, and not have to get into a payback situation, I think
18 we need to work on that as fast as we can.

19
20 I mean, I certainly, you know, could offer a motion, to make
21 sure that it's on paper, but, you know, if you say you will be
22 able to bring something as soon as possible, then we can leave
23 it at that too, and so I just wanted to make sure that -- I
24 certainly agree with what Dr. Porch said, and I really think
25 that the council needs to move in that direction as quickly as
26 possible.

27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Let's listen to Mr. Strelcheck, before
29 we decide what action we're going to take here.

30
31 **MR. STRELCHECK:** Certainly I would leave it up to Carrie and
32 team to decide whether they need a motion. Related to this, I
33 mentioned a Mid-Atlantic recreational reform initiative, and I
34 think this plays very much into that. They have developed a
35 harvest control framework, and they have a technical document
36 that I think they postponed until that framework was completed,
37 but it talks very much about at least starting to address what
38 do you do with outliers, or whatever you want to call them, and
39 smoothing them, and addressing the quota monitoring, and so I
40 think there's a lot of similarities with kind of the work that's
41 ongoing that we could also bring back, in terms of information,
42 and potentially even ask one of their staff to present to the
43 council.

44
45 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Dr. Simmons.

46
47 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I
48 think, Mr. Anson, a motion would be great. We would take that,

1 and we can write a letter, to make sure we're all on the same
2 page, to the Science Center. Thanks.

3
4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Kevin, are you feeling wordy?

5
6 **MR. ANSON:** I am feeling. I don't know about wordy. **To request**
7 **the Southeast Fisheries Science Center provide a presentation to**
8 **the council regarding multiyear ACL averages to monitor annual**
9 **catch limits.**

10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Is there a second to that motion? It's
12 seconded by Mr. Burris. All right. I think we've had a fair
13 amount of discussion, and I think we know what we want to do
14 with that. **Is there any opposition to this motion?** All right.
15 **Not seeing any, the motion carries.** All right. Mr. Chairman.

16
17 **MR. DIAZ:** I am unsure how long the next item is going to take,
18 and so I feel like we ought to take a little break before we
19 tackle that, and it's either going to go really fast or really
20 long, and, if it goes long, I will feel bad. Let's take a
21 fifteen-minute break, and we'll start back at five minutes to
22 three.

23
24 (Whereupon, a brief recess was taken.)

25
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We're going to move right into the Revised
27 Recreational Red Snapper Calibration Ratios, and we're going to
28 call up Dr. Nance to lead us through that.

29
30 **REVISED RECREATIONAL RED SNAPPER CALIBRATION RATIOS**

31
32 **DR. NANCE:** We'll go ahead, Bernie, and bring up -- Ryan, did
33 you want to do the other or do the presentation first?

34
35 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** We'll go ahead and let Mr. Rindone go through
36 the scope here.

37
38 **DR. NANCE:** Okay. Thank you.

39
40 **MR. RINDONE:** Okay, and so Dr. Nance is here to talk about the
41 SSC's deliberations and recommendations from its review of the
42 revised recreational red snapper calibration ratios that were
43 presented to the SSC by representatives from Florida, Alabama,
44 and Mississippi in January, and each state presented a proposal
45 to revise calibrations for its respective estimates of private
46 vessel and state for-hire landings of red snapper to MRIP's
47 Coastal Household Telephone Survey, in the case of Mississippi
48 and Alabama, or to CHTS and the Fishing Effort Survey, in the

1 case of Florida.

2
3 These proposals are updates to the description of the methods,
4 years, and waves used and considered by the SSC in August of
5 2020, and the states provided justification for their
6 recommended selection of years and waves within years, and the
7 SSC considered the following terms of reference for each state's
8 proposal, and so you can read those there.

9
10 Dr. Nance will review the SSC's evaluation of the presentations
11 and materials provided by each state and any recommendations the
12 SSC had to the council, and the SSC's recommendations, that Dr.
13 Nance will present, include what to do for the actual
14 calibration ratio and the SSC's addressing of each of the terms
15 of reference for each state, and so you guys should consider all
16 of this information presented and determine whether it's
17 necessary to recommend new calibration ratios to the council for
18 calibrating the state surveys.

19
20 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Mr. Rindone. Dr. Nance, take it
21 away.

22
23 **DR. NANCE:** Thank you, Dr. Nance. It's good to be here to be
24 able to present this, and, also, Dr. Cody is here also, and I
25 appreciate him being here, and just I know that both of our
26 names are on the agenda for the presentation, and this part is a
27 presentation that I put together of SSC recommendations, and Dr.
28 Cody wasn't involved in that, but, certainly, if he has any
29 input, while I am giving this, I appreciate him doing that.
30 Plus, during the question period, I will be up here, but Dr.
31 Cody certainly is available for questions also, and I just
32 wanted to basically reiterate that.

33
34 Fishery biologists representing marine fishery agencies from
35 Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi presented proposals for
36 revised calibrations for each state's respective estimates of
37 private vessel and state charter/for-hire landings of red
38 snapper to MRIP's CHTS. At the council's request, the proposals
39 updated the years and waves considered by the SSC at the August
40 2020 meeting and provided justifications for these new
41 selections.

42
43 We had these three terms of reference that I will go over, and
44 the way I've set this presentation up is I will present these
45 terms of reference, and I will present the Florida proposal and
46 then the evaluation of the Florida proposal, the Alabama
47 proposal and its evaluation, and the Mississippi proposal and
48 its evaluation. When we received it, we did all the proposals

1 first, and we had general discussions, and then we did each of
2 the states, and so that's how I've set this up, and hopefully
3 that's okay with the council, the way I've done this.

4
5 Our terms of reference for reviewing these proposals, the SSC
6 was tasked with considering the following terms of reference for
7 each state's proposal. Number one, is the proposed revised
8 calibration ratio calculated in a method that is not dissimilar
9 from that which was approved as consistent with the best
10 scientific information available at the SSC's August 2020
11 meeting?

12
13 The second term of reference is, is the justification for the
14 years and waves recommended for calculating the proposed revised
15 calibration ratio sufficient? If not, describe why and, if
16 possible, offer alternatives.

17
18 Number three is any are there any additional clarifications
19 necessary for considering a state's proposed revised calibration
20 ratio as being consistent with the best scientific information
21 available?

22
23 Just to also inform the council, an MRIP Gulf transition team
24 subgroup has been formed to investigate differences between
25 state surveys and MRIP-FES. The team has developed short and
26 long-term research goals to improve understanding of
27 recreational fishery data collection in the Gulf. In the
28 interim, for red snapper, calibration to MRIP-CHTS will be
29 required until the results of the SEDAR 74 stock assessment are
30 available to be considered for use in management, and SEDAR 74,
31 as you know, is the red snapper assessment.

32
33 The Florida proposal, Florida uses the State Reef Fish Survey to
34 measure catch and fishing effort to estimate landings and
35 discards for several reef fish species. SRFS only covers the
36 recreational private vessel, and there is no shore or for-hire
37 mode for the thirteen reef fish species, including red snapper.
38 Effort estimation is conducted via a monthly mail survey. SRFS
39 catch data are estimated from dockside intercepts and complement
40 the MRIP Access Point Angler Intercept Survey, or APAIS.
41 Intercept sampling sites are randomly selected at the same time
42 for both surveys. FWRI methods for calibration are unchanged
43 since 2020.

44
45 Tiffani Cross, who was at the meeting, detailed four options for
46 the calibration ratio informed using varying time series. The
47 first one they went over was May 2015 through December 2019,
48 which was the original calibration period. They also presented

1 information on the May 2015 through December 2017, which is the
2 SRFS and the MRIP-CHTS overlap years, and that was recommended
3 by the SSC at the August 2020 meeting. They also presented
4 using 2018, 2019, and 2021, which are SRFS and MRIP-FES overlap
5 years, and then the fourth one they proposed was all available
6 overlapping estimates from May 2015 through December 2021,
7 excluding 2020.

8
9 The resulting ratios that were presented were not statistically
10 dissimilar between SRFS and either MRIP-CHTS or MRIP-FES for any
11 of the options presented.

12
13 The evaluation of the Florida presentation, the SSC acknowledged
14 Florida's exclusion of 2020, due to severe disruption of the
15 catch portion of the survey during the COVID-19 pandemic. SSC
16 members discussed the merits of moving away from the 2015 to
17 2017 data, due to the inclusion of the CHTS telephone survey.
18 Florida did not select a preferred method, relying instead on
19 the judgement of the SSC to determine the most appropriate time
20 series.

21
22 After discussion of the proposal, and reviewing the inputs and
23 so forth, the motion was the SSC recommends that the proposed
24 Florida calibration from SRFS to MRIP-CHTS for the private
25 angling component of red snapper use data from 2018, 2019, and
26 2021 to determine the updated calibration ratio of 1.29 in
27 numbers and fish and 1.34 in pounds whole weight. That motion
28 carried with two abstentions and three absent.

29
30 In addressing the terms of reference, the SSC found that the
31 methodology used by Florida was not dissimilar from that
32 proposed as BSIA in August of 2020. The SSC recommended using
33 2018, 2019, and 2021 for the updated Florida calibration, based
34 on the presentation justifications, and, after discussing the
35 changing relationship between MRIP-CHTS and MRIP-FES from 2015
36 through 2021, the SSC sought no further clarification on
37 Florida's proposal. Do we want to do each state, or do we want
38 to just go through the whole thing and then have questions at
39 the end?

40
41 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I think we can go ahead and go through each
42 state and then circle back.

43
44 **DR. NANCE:** Okay. I will do that. The next one was Alabama.
45 Through the Alabama proposal, the primary objective of their
46 survey, which is Snapper Check, is to provide monitoring of the
47 private recreational sector for the Alabama red snapper fishing
48 season.

1
2 Mandatory reporting and dockside sampling participation are
3 required to land red snapper as a private angler during the
4 fishing season. The dockside survey intercepts also collect
5 biological and trip information. Dead discards are not required
6 to be reported. Residency status, being state and county, or
7 country, of each -- State and county of each interviewed angler
8 is collected during each wave, at all sites, and is used to
9 justify the effort information calculated from the effort
10 survey.

11
12 Matching effort and catch data is conducted using the unique
13 identifiers supplied on the landing reports and collected at the
14 dockside surveys. This also allows the calculation of non-
15 response to the effort survey. APAIS intercepts are conducted
16 by the same staff as for Snapper Check intercepts, and, for
17 effort, Snapper Check measures by the vessel, whereas MRIP
18 measures by angler.

19
20 Mr. Anson presented the differences in fishing effort observed
21 between Alabama's two coastal counties, Baldwin on the east side
22 and Mobile on the west side, and angler counts in APAIS during
23 open red snapper seasons have been substantially higher since
24 2014. More anglers are being interviewed by APAIS in Baldwin
25 County, which hosts more tourism and non-coastal resident
26 anglers. Mr. Anson went on to conclude that 2018 and 2019 MRIP-
27 CHTS may be elevating effort estimates caused by sampling that
28 was not representative of Alabama's anglers. He added that
29 daily angler effort has been significantly reduced in 2021 and
30 2022, compared to 2018. The Alabama fishing season duration
31 increased 340 percent from 2018 through 2022 and 288 percent
32 from 2021 to 2022.

33
34 Hearing that presentation, and in discussion, the SSC
35 acknowledged that the methods used by Alabama were similar to
36 those determined to be consistent with BSIA in August of 2020.
37 The SSC thought the rationale for including 2020 was firm, given
38 that Alabama's angler intercepts and effort surveys were
39 functionally as intended during 2020, and so there wasn't any
40 disruption because of COVID.

41
42 The SSC noted that there was not a considerable change in the
43 methodology and sampling between 2018 and 2021. Some SSC
44 members, during our discussion, though that 2018 through 2021
45 were similar enough, in most respects, to be considered
46 together. After lengthy discussions, this motion was made.

47
48 The SSC recommends that the proposed Alabama calibration from

1 Snapper Check to MRIP-CHTS, and so Snapper Check divided by
2 MRIP-CHTS, for the private angling and state charter/for-hire
3 component of red snapper use data from 2018, 2019, 2020, and
4 2021 to determine the updated calibration ratio of 0.548 in
5 pounds whole weight. That motion carried with two abstentions
6 and three absent.

7
8 In addressing the terms of reference, the SSC found that the
9 methodology used by Alabama was not dissimilar from that
10 proposed at our August 2020 meeting. The SSC did not think that
11 there was adequate justification for using only 2020 and 2021
12 for Alabama's calibration ratio. The SSC recommended using 2018
13 through 2021 for Alabama's updated calibration ratio, based on
14 the aforementioned discussion, and the SSC sought no further
15 clarification from Alabama's proposal.

16
17 Mr. Trevor Moncrief presented an overview of Mississippi's Tails
18 n' Scales survey, and this survey is mandatory. It uses a
19 twenty-four-hour unique trip identifier. Anglers cannot make
20 another red snapper trip under Tails 'n Scales until they
21 complete that reporting on the previous trip, and the strength
22 of the Tails 'n Scales enforcement, which observes about 95
23 percent compliance. Tails 'n Scales has operated consistently
24 within the 2018 through 2021 timeframe, with limited
25 modifications to the user experience interface for the required
26 mobile application and changes to aid law enforcement.

27
28 Trevor outlined Mississippi's proposed revised calibration,
29 which limited the comparison between Tails 'n Scales and MRIP-
30 CHTS to Waves 3 and 4, which is May and June and July and
31 August. There is concern about the validity of MRIP estimates
32 outside of the high-use waves, which are 3 and 4, from 2018
33 through 2020. Waves in which the red snapper fishery does not
34 primarily occur are subject to larger disparities in estimates,
35 which is likely associated with a smaller number of completed
36 MRIP surveys.

37
38 When comparing estimated MRIP fishing effort and Mississippi's
39 recreational license data, newly-derived effort estimates using
40 MRIP-FES potentially represents a significant overestimation in
41 angler effort. This is from the summary, and, if Richard has
42 any questions on it, I am putting him in here, but, anyway, Dr.
43 Richard Cody, from Science and Technology, was there at our
44 meeting.

45
46 For MRIP, Florida harvest efforts are derived using an effort
47 survey, along with a separate dockside survey, whereas
48 Mississippi and Alabama operate a single survey to provide catch

1 and effort information. Dr. Cody added that a relationship
2 between the variance of estimates, as opposed to the number of
3 APAIS samples, may better correlate to the resultant landing
4 estimates.

5
6 During that discussion, an SSC member asked whether MRIP had
7 researched some of the issues outlined for Mississippi, such as
8 the fact of low sample sizes, for improving accuracy and
9 precision of MRIP's estimates. Dr. Cody replied, at our
10 meeting, that exploring these issues was one of the goals of the
11 MRIP transition team and the SEDAR 74 research track assessment
12 for red snapper.

13
14 After that presentation, we started our evaluation, and the
15 magnitude of catch for 2019 and 2021 were both very high.
16 However, Mississippi accepted using 2019, to have a consistent
17 three-year time series to inform its calibration. Some SSC
18 members thought that excluding 2021, simply because of the
19 magnitude of the estimates from Waves 3 and 4 in that year, may
20 not be appropriate. Observing anomalies

21
22 Mississippi demonstrated, quantitatively, that the estimate from
23 2021 was not possible for the state's anglers to achieve and
24 that excluding such data is normal practice in science.

25
26 During our discussion, some SSC members thought it more
27 appropriate to either include 2019 and 2021 or exclude both of
28 them and not treat them differently. An SSC member noted that,
29 if 2021 is not realistic, then excluding it is reasonable, based
30 on best practices and the scientific literature. Another SSC
31 member observed that the two years are lower, which are 2018 and
32 2020, and two were higher, 2019 and 2021, and so that trend,
33 based on a sample size, you know in each mode, is not possible.

34
35 After deliberation for quite a while, a motion was made. The
36 SSC recommends that the proposed Mississippi calibration from
37 Tails 'n Scales to MRIP-CHTS, which is Tails 'n Scales divided
38 by MRIP-CHTS, for the private recreational sector of red snapper
39 use data from 2018 through 2020 as the base years and restricts
40 the harvest comparison to just Waves 3 and 4. The updated
41 calibration ratio is 0.503 in pounds whole weight. That motion
42 carried twelve to five with five abstentions.

43
44 In addressing the terms of reference for Mississippi, the SSC
45 found that the methodology used by Mississippi was not
46 dissimilar from that presented in August 2020. The SSC agreed
47 with excluding 2021, due to the implausibility of the estimate,
48 and understood the justification by Mississippi for using only

1 Waves 3 and 4. The SSC recommended using Waves 3 and 4 for the
2 years 2018 through 2020 for Mississippi's update calibration
3 ratio, based on the aforementioned discussions, and the SSC
4 sought no further clarifications from Mississippi, and that, Mr.
5 Chair, ends the presentation.
6

7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Nance. Are there any questions
8 on the SSC's deliberations or recommendations?
9

10 **DR. NANCE:** I will say this, that all three presentations were
11 excellent. There was good presentations, and there was the
12 ability that we had great discussions, all during the
13 presentations, and so I appreciated each of those states being
14 able to come and present those.
15

16 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Anson.
17

18 **MR. ANSON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, Dr. Nance, for
19 the presentation, and thank you to you, and the rest of the SSC
20 members, for, you know, having a thorough discussion and review
21 of the proposals that each of the states brought forward, and,
22 certainly, from Alabama's perspective, we appreciate the
23 opportunity to have gone through the exercise of doing this.
24

25 You know, I certainly understand that the issue of calibration
26 has been a prickly one, but it has come to at least a conclusion
27 for this phase, and, you know, certainly, from our perspective,
28 we are a little nervous, potentially, for the next iteration,
29 when we have to deal with FES, and certainly, you know, if we
30 need to start talking about that, and how we might want to set
31 ourselves up for dealing with another round of calibration, we
32 might want to start doing that, but, again, I just wanted to
33 express, you know, our appreciation for the process.
34

35 Going back to when the council, you know, first passed the
36 regional management amendment, you know, it provided the
37 opportunity for the states to utilize that resource, a little
38 bit more efficiently potentially, for each of their respective
39 groups of anglers, and it has provided those benefits, albeit,
40 with this calibration, there will be some impacts to season
41 length for our folks going forward, but, you know, certainly,
42 again, we appreciate the opportunity to have gone through the
43 exercise, and I encourage the council, and the agency, once the
44 council has passed this, if it does go forward, for the agency
45 to process this as quickly as possible, and so thank you.
46

47 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thanks, Kevin, for those words and
48 thoughts. Mr. Dyskow.

1
2 **MR. DYSKOW:** Thank you, Dr. Frazer. I don't know if I should
3 direct this question to you or to Andy or whom, but what is the
4 next step?
5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Sure, and so, again, in our discussion here, I
7 would expect a motion, coming from one of the council members,
8 to initiate a framework action to implement these calibration
9 ratios, as Kevin said, you know, as quickly, from Alabama's
10 perspective, as we possibly can, and that would be the next
11 step. Mr. Burris.
12
13 **MR. RICK BURRIS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't know if I could
14 say it any better than Kevin did, but Mississippi certainly
15 appreciates the opportunity to go through this exercise, and we
16 appreciate working with Dr. Cody's group, and Andy, and,
17 obviously, the SSC, for all the work that they put into it.
18
19 The outcome is not as optimum as we would like, but it is a step
20 in the right direction, and I think just our methodology being
21 approved, and being able to -- I say methodology, but the
22 addition of our data and the unconventional way that we went
23 about it, to say the least, and we really appreciate the
24 opportunity to discuss that and show our rationale behind what
25 we brought to the table, and so thank you for that, and I look
26 forward to working with this in the future.
27
28 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Thanks, Rick. Go ahead, C.J.
29
30 **DR. SWEETMAN:** I am going to third what Kevin and Rick said
31 there. I really appreciate your leadership here, Dr. Nance, in
32 helping move this through the process here, and I really
33 appreciate the transparent process and the back-and-forth that
34 was going on between the states and the SSC. I think you guys
35 did a great job. Thank you very much.
36
37 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** All right. Is there any other discussion?
38 Okay. I will go with Susan and then Kevin.
39
40 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, Phil asked my question, and so I guess, if I
41 need to help with the motion, to help with the discussion, is
42 that --
43
44 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Well, we certainly are going to need a motion
45 to accept the SSC's recommendations as it relates to calibration
46 ratios and then to incorporate them into a framework action.
47
48 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I don't care, and I'm sorry, and we're having

1 a sidebar, and Kevin was going to make a motion, which I don't
2 care, and I just have another question, but I don't know if we
3 need to make the motion to have the discussion. Bernie, would
4 you please bring that motion up?
5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Is that coming from Kevin or -- Which motion
7 are we talking about?
8
9 **MS. BOGGS:** Kevin's motion.
10
11 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Way to take charge, Kevin.
12
13 **MR. ANSON:** The motion is to request staff to begin development
14 of a framework action to update the recreational red snapper
15 data calibration ratios for Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi
16 using the calibration ratios recommended by the Scientific and
17 Statistical Committee during their January 2023 meeting.
18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan, would you like to second that?
20
21 **MS. BOGGS:** I will second that motion.
22
23 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Excellent. All right. Is there any further
24 discussion on this motion? Susan.
25
26 **MS. BOGGS:** Well, I don't know if it pertains to this motion. I
27 mean, I'm in favor of this, but I have a question, and, of
28 course, I'm going to convolute this, and this is all CHTS, and
29 so what happens -- I guess the next step after this is they use
30 this calibrations, and we update the catch levels, and then, at
31 some point, does it get converted to FES? I don't understand
32 this, because here we are again with CHTS versus FES.
33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Rindone.
35
36 **MR. RINDONE:** The conversion to FES isn't something that really
37 comes into play until we get through the SEDAR 74 process. We
38 have probably a couple more assessment webinars that are
39 scheduled before the review workshop, and that's currently
40 scheduled for July 31 to August 4, and that will be at the Gulf
41 Council office in Tampa. If you're planning to come, let
42 somebody know, so we can make accommodations for space and
43 things.
44
45 Then, after that, any feedback that is taken from the review
46 workshop will be received by the Science Center, and they will
47 make any modifications to the setup, to the model, after the
48 review workshop, and the SSC will get a chance to look at it, as

1 a body, after that, and then the operational assessment process
2 will start.

3
4 It's during the operational assessment that we actually get
5 management advice, or data that we can use to inform management
6 advice, and, depending on the kinds of things that come out of
7 the review workshop, it will dictate how long that operational
8 assessment might take. It could be -- I mean, at this point, I
9 wouldn't expect there to be any management recommendations to
10 come from the SSC to the council until late into 2024.

11
12 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Susan.

13
14 **MS. BOGGS:** Mr. Chair, I apologize, and I forgot that red
15 snapper is not in FES yet, and I need a flow chart. Thank you.

16
17 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Not to worry. All right. Is there any other
18 discussion on this motion? I am not seeing any hands. **Is there**
19 **any opposition to the motion? Seeing none, the motion carries.**

20
21 All right. We will move into our final agenda for the Reef Fish
22 Committee, and that's an Other Business item, and I believe that
23 that has to do with a discussion of transfer of federal for-hire
24 reef fish permits. Is Ms. Levy going to lead that discussion,
25 Greg, or are you going to lead that?

26
27 **OTHER BUSINESS**

28 **DISCUSSION OF TRANSFER OF FEDERAL FOR-HIRE REEF FISH PERMITS**

29
30 **DR. STUNZ:** Well, I'm fine bringing it up, or if you want me to
31 set the stage, Mara, or I don't know how you want to approach
32 that, Mr. Chairman.

33
34 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Why don't you set the stage, Greg?

35
36 **DR. STUNZ:** Okay. I asked for this to be on Other Business, and
37 Mara had been involved in some of the communications, as well as
38 council staff, and there is an issue happening, out mainly with
39 the Texas fleet, and I think that's why, you know, it hadn't
40 elevated to other areas, that kind of thing, in terms of an
41 issue.

42
43 It has to do with switching vessel permits back and forth to
44 allow federal -- Vessels that have federal permits to fish in
45 state waters, and it's also primarily because of the
46 availability of snapper in this region of Texas, pretty high
47 availability, where they target them, and so what happened was
48 that probably -- What I'm suspecting is, with the SEFHIER

1 program, and folks were paying more attention to when vessels
2 were in and out and that sort of thing, and it started to
3 probably literally appear on people's radars, and so enforcement
4 was showing up at these individuals' businesses, and there was
5 some questions of whether what they were doing was allowed, or
6 was it not, depending on how you interpreted the CFR and a whole
7 variety of things, and so they approached me, mainly because,
8 when law enforcement showed up, they said they couldn't do it,
9 and, of course, they had a business plan, and trips sold, and,
10 you know, it was kind of a sudden thing.

11
12 Their issue was that, you know, they don't want to not be in
13 compliance, but, at the same time, if they're not, they would
14 have liked to have more advance notice, and I think we're going
15 to hear some public testimony here tomorrow regarding this, and
16 we'll have a little better idea of exactly what the situation
17 is, but I just wanted to get that on the table, with the idea,
18 hopefully, that we could at least discuss it and have it very
19 transparent, and is this something we want, or we don't, and,
20 that way, they can plan with their businesses and be legal. I
21 mean, the last thing I think they want is to be in some sort of
22 violation.

23
24 Then what happened is the interpretation, coming out of Mara's
25 office and the council, at first, was, well, no, you can't do
26 that, and it had to do with are you fishing for just snapper or
27 other reef fish, all types of other complexities, and then, on
28 top of that, it has to do with the date that you switch your
29 permits, and is it a calendar year and so on, and so, at the end
30 of the day, I guess it was determined that what they were doing
31 was in fact not in violation or anything, and so they're
32 continuing to do it now, is my understanding, and so, anyway,
33 Tom, that's where we are.

34
35 I guess the broader picture is I wanted to get it on the table,
36 and make sure that these folks doing that, you know, have some
37 transparency here with this council and law enforcement and our
38 legal interpretations, to make sure that they're not doing
39 anything that they shouldn't be, and so that's a long-winded
40 answer, and maybe Mara has more information on the real legal
41 aspects of this.

42
43 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Mara.

44
45 **MS. LEVY:** Well, I'm just going to start off by saying that the
46 interpretation from my office has never changed. How folks have
47 been looking at the regulations, and maybe what's been
48 disseminated, may have changed, but, since sector separation was

1 implemented in 2015, the regs have been -- The regs have been
2 written this way, and it's always been our interpretation that
3 this is how they apply.

4
5 Essentially, there's a part of the regs, related to the for-hire
6 quota and ACT, that say that these catch levels apply to vessels
7 that have been issued a valid federal charter vessel headboat
8 permit for Gulf reef fish at any time during the fishing year,
9 and that was out in there specifically to prohibit sort of going
10 from -- Fishing from both pots, right, and it's only an issue
11 for red snapper, because, for red snapper, we have the
12 recreational sector divided into federal for-hire and private
13 angling.

14
15 We did not want people to be a federal for-hire vessel during
16 one part of the year and then not be a federal for-hire vessel
17 for the other part of the year, and this all happened before
18 state management as well, right, and so you have to remember,
19 you know, that the management has changed over time, which is
20 kind of what has maybe allowed this to be more of an issue in
21 Texas, and I don't know.

22
23 Essentially, if you have a for-hire, a federal for-hire, permit
24 on your vessel, at any time during the fishing year, and so
25 January 1 through the end of the year, you are considered to be
26 allowed to only fish under the federal for-hire catch limit, and
27 so, if that season is closed, even if you've taken your permit
28 off the vessel, you have indicated that that's the type of
29 vessel you're going to be for that year, and you cannot fish
30 under the private angling component quota.

31
32 From my understanding, the reason that this has been an issue in
33 Texas is because Texas an open season, right, for private
34 anglers in state waters that starts on January 1, and so, if I
35 have a vessel that I generally have a federal for-hire permit
36 on, but I remove it from that vessel by the end of year-one, and
37 so, on January 1 of the next year, it's not on my vessel, then
38 I'm a private angler, until I put it on my vessel, right, and so
39 I could be a private angler, fish up until the time that I
40 transfer it onto my vessel, maybe in May or whatever, and the
41 June federal season opens for Texas, and I fish under the
42 federal season, because it's a one-way thing, but I can't then
43 transfer it off and become a private angler again, because I've
44 had it on my vessel during that fishing year.

45
46 I understand that it's quite complex to explain, but I think
47 that was the issue, that some of these folks didn't have the
48 federal for-hire permit on their vessel as of January 1, and

1 they were fishing under the private angling component quota, and
2 then they put it on their vessel and they become for-hire
3 federal vessels for the rest of the year.

4
5 Whether that is -- The way the regs were written, it didn't --
6 They only flowed one way, right, and it was linked to the
7 federal for-hire permit, and so it doesn't flow back the other
8 way with the private angler, and I don't know if that was
9 intentional, but it's just that I think, at that time, it wasn't
10 really considered an issue, right, and we didn't have the same
11 state management type of thing, and I wasn't something that we
12 were really thinking about.

13
14 If the council thinks that this is a big problem, and it is
15 having a big impact, you know, we can look at how to re-write
16 the regs to maybe prohibit this type of one-way flow of the
17 regulations, but I guess I would just ask about whether it
18 really is a big problem, and are other states -- Is the issue
19 happening in other states, and is it a big problem for Texas,
20 and those kind of things.

21
22 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Levy. Dr. Stunz.

23
24 **DR. STUNZ:** Mara, that was exactly my question, is how big of an
25 issue it is, and, in my understanding, it's just a very limited
26 number of vessels, maybe like three to six or something, and I
27 don't know. When we hear public testimony, maybe we can ask
28 that question, to really see what the full impact is, and I
29 certainly can't speak for the State of Texas, Dakus, and if it's
30 a problem for you guys as an agency or not, but this, I think,
31 is a very restricted issue, which was the whole idea is that
32 they had been doing this for quite some time, and I don't know
33 how long, but, you know, I'm thinking like ten years or more,
34 maybe, in my mind, something like that.

35
36 Then, all of a sudden, they had that plan to be doing that this
37 year, particularly for the winter Texans that show up, and then,
38 all of a sudden, law enforcement is on their dock telling them
39 that they can't, and that was where it kind of concerns me, and
40 I think it was very similar, or analogous, at least, to the dude
41 fishing that we've all been talking about, and kind of operating
42 in that realm, but I just wanted to make sure that, you know, at
43 least we either have discussion, and maybe we don't need to do
44 anything at this point, and I don't know, but that they have
45 some ability to plan to operate, or not, depending upon what we
46 decide, and that was at least my goal at this point.

47
48 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Boggs.

1
2 **MS. BOGGS:** I have asked, at several meetings, why we have
3 landings for red snapper in January and February and March, and
4 I never really got an answer, I don't think, since San Antonio
5 last August, and I still haven't really got a clear answer, and
6 I was kind of told that it was probably headboats, and we really
7 don't know who it is, but now I've got my answer, and it sounds
8 like it's in Texas.

9
10 I am empathize with these boats. However, I don't know how the
11 people in the other states feel about it, but I know that a
12 couple of fishermen that have come to me about this, because
13 they see the landings too, and they've asked the same question,
14 and they don't feel like it's the fair thing that these boats be
15 able to fish when the other boats are excluded from the fishery.

16
17 Now, it might be different if in -- I will just use our
18 business, for example. If, on August 2, I can turn my permits
19 in, move them to another boat, because the transfer period is so
20 quick now, and I come into the Permits Office with the ability
21 to do this, and I know, Mara, that you can't do this, but my
22 point is, if we could take our permits off of our boat, on
23 August 2 or 3, whenever the season ends, and start fishing
24 Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in the Alabama state
25 season, whoo-hoo, bonus for us, but we can't do that, and this
26 is, again, another loophole that wasn't intended, and nobody
27 foresaw, and I was always under the impression that, if you --
28 It's kind of like in the Headboat Collaborative.

29
30 When we did the collaborative, you had to declare, on January 1,
31 are you in the collaborative or you're out, and you can't say
32 that I'm going to fish up to June 1 and then I'm going to be
33 part of the collaborative. Well, to me, this is the same thing,
34 and you need to declare, when the season opens on January 1, are
35 you a federal boat or are you a state boat, and these are not
36 private anglers going out to fish. They are running charters on
37 these headboats, I'm sure. I'm sure it's not for their pleasure
38 that they're doing this, and I mean, Greg, you said they've sold
39 tickets.

40
41 I don't know how robust the fishery is in state waters in the
42 State of Texas in January and February and March, but some of
43 these headboats, I know these fishermen, and I don't -- I
44 shouldn't say that, and I don't know the boats that are doing
45 it, and I don't know, but I know some of the headboats in Texas
46 carry ninety-plus people.

47
48 Well, I think about the recreational anglers, and how do they

1 feel if these headboats are in these state waters catching all
2 these fish, even though I know they can go out to 200 miles, and
3 so I look at it both from the charter/for-hire fleet and the
4 headboat fleet, that it's a disservice that some can and some
5 can't.

6
7 It's yet another loophole, like the dude fishing, and I was very
8 open that I'm not a big fan of that, but it's a loophole, and
9 now I'm concerned too about the recreational fishermen in the
10 State of Texas. You know, you're using their resource that they
11 fought hard to get, and so I am sure that we'll hear a lot of
12 comments about it tomorrow, but I'm going to have to say, if it
13 were me, and we wait until Full Council, but I don't want to
14 throw this at Full Council, but I will probably make a motion
15 that we need to look at this and close this loop and restrict,
16 and, too, if I might add, the headboats, we are held to a much
17 higher restriction than anybody, I think, because we've been
18 reporting for so much longer, and those go against the headboat
19 landings, is what I have been told.

20
21 For those headboat fishermen, if we look at, you know, Amendment
22 42 down the road, or something like that, guess what, these guys
23 are going to have the leg up, because they have the better catch
24 history, and so there's a lot of things that I think we need to
25 look at here, and I do think it's something that we need to look
26 at. The council may support it, or may not, and we'll see what
27 the comment says tomorrow, but I would be in favor of trying to
28 stop this type of activity, where the federal for-hire fishermen
29 can fish outside of the federal season, if that's how they're
30 going to operate their business on a normal basis Thank you.

31
32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Ms. Boggs. Mr. Anson.

33
34 **MR. ANSON:** Certainly Andy, or others, can comment, but my
35 perspective as to how this came to be was to address that issue
36 that Mara described is that there is a federally-permitted
37 vessel, and then the state season is about to come open, after
38 the federal season had been open, and so they transfer the
39 permit off of their primary fishing vessel onto another vessel,
40 in time so they can go fish the state season.

41
42 In my notes, and I have some notes on some of program documents,
43 related to Snapper Check, that at least was in place as of 2017,
44 and so that was primarily to address the states in the eastern
45 Gulf that were, up to that time, several years into non-
46 compliant federal seasons and having their own state seasons,
47 and so that's where that came from, and, you know, whether we
48 looked at it or not, I can't remember, you know, trying to do

1 both ways and look at it, but I think, at the time, the council
2 voted with the understanding that it would really put a curb to
3 trying to transfer those vessels by having the remainder of the
4 year -- Or when you signed-up for that vessel, or it became
5 federally-permitted, for the remainder of the year, it had a
6 federal permit, or a federal fishing status designation, and,
7 therefore, it had to comply with the federal fishing seasons.

8

9 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Mr. Strelcheck.

10

11 **MR. STRELCHECK:** I don't have a lot to add, and I think the
12 challenge here is kind of the past intent of the council, what
13 we were trying to, you know, prevent, or limit, and this history
14 has -- It goes back to Amendment 30B, if you remember that, and
15 the state seasons expanding, and, ultimately, we put in a
16 provision that would not allow fishing in state waters if the
17 state regulations were less restrictive than the federal
18 regulations, right, and so the challenge, the hook, here is the
19 federal permit requirement, right, and we modified, updated,
20 revised the regulations when sector separation came along.

21

22 This does seem to be at least an activity that was not
23 necessarily intended, and it's something that we were not
24 wanting to occur, and it doesn't necessarily mean that that
25 hasn't changed since this time, and I think that's a
26 conversation we need to have, but I'm certainly hoping to
27 further discussion, in terms of how to address this, and my
28 concern is, while it may not be a big issue now, will it become
29 a bigger issue as more people realize that there is a loophole
30 in the regulations.

31

32 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Okay. Dr. Simmons.

33

34 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and so I've
35 had a couple of calls on this too, probably from Dr. Stunz
36 asking them to call our office, and so, in the interim, you
37 know, should the council want to make changes to this, I think
38 we currently need to have some type of place on the SEFHIER
39 website or somewhere that we can direct folks that may be doing
40 this as to what requirements have to happen of the federal
41 permit, so that law enforcement knows how to enforce this,
42 because, right now, I've just been directing people to NOAA OLE,
43 on some of these issues, because it seems like there is some
44 confusion there on the current regulations.

45

46 I don't know if it's possible to develop something on the
47 website that says when you do this, or have frequently asked
48 questions when this occurs, when the federal permit is

1 transferred, and what are the requirements of that permit when
2 that happens, what does the vessel owner, or permit owner, have
3 to do, and I think that would be helpful. That may exist right
4 now, but it's not readily accessible. Thanks.

5
6 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Ms. Levy.

7
8 **MS. LEVY:** I guess we can talk about it, but I don't really
9 understand that, because the only point is this only happens if
10 you do not have a federal permit on your vessel as of January 1
11 of a calendar year and the state allows fishing for red snapper
12 in state waters. That is the only time that this is an issue,
13 right, because, at that point, you're under the, quote, private
14 angling state charter component catch limit. As soon as you put
15 that permit on your vessel, all the rules that apply to
16 federally-permitted vessels apply to you, and you can't fish as
17 a private angler.

18
19 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** I appreciate that, right, and it's
20 exceptionally clear to you, right, and I'm not trying to be
21 mean, right, but it's exceptionally clear to me when you explain
22 it to me as well, but the fact of the matter is that we have an
23 issue, right, and it's not completely clear, or at least not
24 obviously clear to me, that everybody understands that, and so
25 it's a communication issue, and I think what Dr. Simmons is
26 suggesting that we take advantage, right, of whatever tools that
27 we have, to make sure that we improve the clarity for the
28 benefit of the for-hire sector as well as the law enforcement
29 folks that might be involved.

30
31 Where we go from here, you know, we may want to choose, as a
32 council, to modify the rule, but this is not an action type of
33 an item today, and it's an informational item, and we'll decide
34 where to go, but I do think there's a communication
35 responsibility, on our part, and I will let Dr. Simmons and her
36 staff think about that a little bit moving forward. Dr. Stunz.

37
38 **DR. STUNZ:** Thank you, Tom, for letting this come up in Other
39 Business, because this was supposed to be a real quick thing,
40 and, you know, it just came up, and there wasn't time, and maybe
41 we do, and maybe we don't, and I don't know, and I want to
42 reiterate that these folks that I'm talking to are not looking
43 to violate the law, and I don't think they are. You know,
44 they're just trying to do what's right, and so the other just
45 little layer of this too is that, you know, it's happening in
46 state waters, and so, you know, where does the Texas law
47 enforcement come into this, and, you know, I don't know.

1 It's a much more complex issue, and I didn't intend for us to
2 get into any heavy discussions now, but we need to decide, like
3 you're saying, and do we need to elevate this or not, or
4 whatever, to where we can have some more meaningful discussion
5 and figure out where to go next.

6
7 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dr. Stunz. I think we can do that.
8 Ms. Boggs.

9
10 **MS. BOGGS:** Thank you for recognizing me, Mr. Chair. So, Mara,
11 I understand what you're saying, is they are not conducting
12 illegal activity. My big hiccup with this is the fact that the
13 fish they are catching are going against the federal for-hire
14 fleet. Yes, ma'am, they are, and that's an issue, I mean,
15 because I've asked that question multiple times.

16
17 If you look for charter/for-hire, there are landings in January,
18 February, and March, and that's a big issue. If they were going
19 against Texas, I don't care. Sorry, Rick, and I'm looking at
20 Rick, but you understand what I'm saying. It's unfair, because
21 no other landings for state guideboats or private recreational
22 anglers go against the charter/for-hire fleet, and, in this
23 instance, they are being deducted from the charter/for-hire
24 fleet numbers.

25
26 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** A valid point. I mean, it's worth pursuing,
27 for sure, and I don't know exactly what's going on there yet.
28 Dakus.

29
30 **MR. GEESLIN:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Susan, I can't speak
31 directly to the federal charter/for-hire landings during that
32 January, February, and March, but what I did do is I looked
33 back, and I looked at our landings, state-water landings, which
34 are either private recreational landings or state charter/for-
35 hire landings during that January 1 to May 31 time period.

36
37 On average, they're about 10 to 15 percent of our quota, and,
38 last year, it looked like we landed about 35,000 pounds during
39 that time period, and this issue recently has just emerged for
40 us, and so I agree that this is probably more of an education
41 and outreach and conveying a clear message to these anglers,
42 whether they are federal charter/for-hire during certain parts
43 of the season, and they've been trying to, you know, in their
44 mind, go through a legal procedure and take the permit off their
45 federal charter/for-hire boat and then fishing in the state
46 waters, and that's something that I feel that we need to clarify
47 for them, one way or the other, and we're certainly happy to
48 help out with that education and outreach and involve our law

1 enforcement and approach this in a little friendlier manner, to
2 get them all onboard.

3

4 **CHAIRMAN FRAZER:** Thank you, Dakus. All right, and so I think,
5 you know, we'll have some discussion about this over the next
6 couple of days, and think about a potential path forward, but,
7 Greg, I thank you for bringing that up, and to where everybody
8 can contribute to the discussion, and so is there any further
9 business to come before the Reef Fish Committee? All right. I
10 am not seeing any, Mr. Chair, and I'm going to turn it back to
11 you.

12

13 (Whereupon, the meeting adjourned on January 31, 2023.)

14

15

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